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STAMPEDE IN GUNTUR

Three killed in event attended by Naidu

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DECADE-LONG EFFORT

Archive on BHU founder takes shape

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STRENGTHENING TIES

India, Austria to sign migration agreement

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GEOPOLITICS

Navigating the Asian century

India has many dilemmas in an Asia-led multipolar world

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COURT ORDER

Issue passport to PDP chief's mother: HC

NEWS » PAGE 8

India asks Pakistan to free prisoners, says ready to solve humanitarian matters

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

India is committed to addressing "all humanitarian matters, including those pertaining to prisoners" with Pakistan, the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement after New Delhi and Islamabad exchanged lists of prisoners on Sunday. The exchange takes place in accordance with the 2008 Agreement on Consular Access every year on January 1 and July 1.

"The Government has called for early release and repatriation of civilian prisoners, missing Indian defence personnel, and fishermen along with their boats, from Pakistan's custody," a press note released by the Ministry said. India also asked to fast-track the release and repatriation of 631 Indian fishermen and two Indian civilian prisoners "who have completed their sentence and whose nationality has been confirmed and conveyed to Pakistan".

Indian side sought immediate consular access to 30 fishermen and 22 civilian prisoners

The Ministry said that the Indian side had sought "immediate" consular access to the "remaining 30 fishermen and 22 civilian prisoners in Pakistan's custody, who are believed to be Indian".

Delhi has shared lists of 339 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 95 Pakistani fishermen who are in India's custody. Pakistan was also asked to confirm "nationality status" of 71 Pakistani prisoners, including fishermen, whose repatriation is pending as Islamabad has not yet confirmed their citizenship status.

List of nuclear facilities

The two sides also exchanged lists of their nuclear facilities on Sunday as part of a 1988 pact that is aimed at preventing attacks targeting nuclear installations in each other's territory.

The exchange of the list took place under the provisions of the agreement on the prohibition of attack against nuclear installations and facilities, the Ministry said. It was done simultaneously through diplomatic channels in New Delhi and Islamabad.

The exchange of the list came amid continuing strain in ties between the two countries over the Kashmir issue as well as cross-border terrorism.
(With PTI inputs)

December GST revenues up from November lows

The third highest monthly collection so far and 15% higher than a year ago; Bihar reports the highest growth in revenues at 36%, and Goa, Odisha, Manipur among States that record a dip

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues rose to nearly ₹1.5 lakh crore in December, the third highest monthly collection so far and 15% higher than a year ago. December's GST kitty also reflected a 2.5% uptick over November 2022's collections that were the lowest in three months.

This is the 10th month in a row that GST collections have crossed the ₹1.4 lakh crore mark, with revenues from import of goods rising 8% and revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) increasing 18% from the revenues yielded by these sources during December 2021.

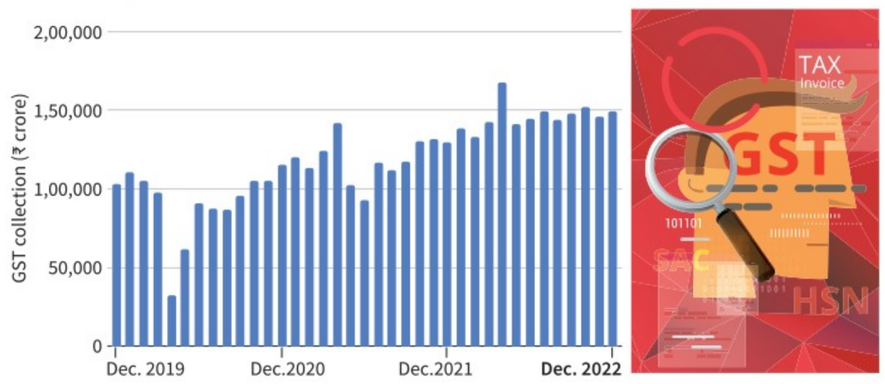
The gross GST revenue collected during December 2022, which reflect transactions undertaken in November is ₹1,49,507 crore, the Finance Ministry said.

Of this figure, the Central GST (CGST) is ₹26,711 crore, State GST (SGST) is ₹33,357 crore, Integrated GST (IGST) is ₹78,434 crore (including ₹40,263 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is ₹11,005 crore (including ₹850 crore collected on import of goods), the Ministry added.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Revenue check

India's goods and service tax collections surged to ₹1,49,507 crore in December 2022. The revenues were 15% higher than December 2021



NEARBY

Citizens want real problems discussed

BENGALURU
The year 2023 will be an election year in Karnataka, with Assembly polls likely in May and civic polls mostly later in the year. Citizen groups want the real problems of the common people to become the debating points. » Page 2

Metro collected ₹1.17 cr. in fine for oversized luggage

BENGALURU
The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has collected ₹1.17 crore in penalties for oversized luggage in the last five years. » Page 3

Karnataka tops in distribution of KCCs

BENGALURU
Among five States in southern India, Karnataka has the highest operative Kisan Credit Cards (KCCs) issued by cooperative banks, regional rural banks, and commercial banks. » Page 4

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 5

Work on Kalasa-Banduri project will commence soon, says Pralhad Joshi

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Replying to the charge made by Congress leaders that the clearance given to the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of Kalasa and Banduri schemes is just an eyewash, Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines Pralhad Joshi on Sunday said the work on the project will start in two-and-a-half months.

Addressing presspersons in Hubballi, the Union Minister clarified that there is no need for environmental clearance as it is a drinking water project and as far as forest clearance is concerned, it will be secured at the State-level itself, as the requirement of forest land is very less.

He further clarified that as the forest land required is less, clearance can be secured at the State-level itself and there is no need to approach the Union Forest Ministry.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi addressing presspersons in Hubballi on Sunday. KIRAN BAKALE

On the questions raised by Congress leader H.K. Patil and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar on the validity of the document as it [document] is undated, Mr. Joshi said that it is the Congress politics that is outdated now and not the document.

"The document is dated December 29, 2022 and there is also a government to government communication on the project indicating the clearance. It is the date of Mr. Patil and the Congress that has expired," he said.

To a query, Mr. Joshi clarified that there is nothing in the office memorandum of December 29, 2022 which mandated that the Central Water Commission (CWC) should be consulted for any further clearances. "The DPR has already been cleared, only other technical clearances are required and that will be done within two-and-a-half months," he said.

On the Congress allegation that the BJP has duped the Panchamasali and Vokkaliga communities on reservation under 2A category, Mr. Joshi countered saying that it is the Congress which is good at duping people.

Clarifying that there is nothing in law that prevented announcing a decision on reservation based on an interim report, the Union Minister said that the decision has not been taken in a hurry but after considering various surveys and the interim report by the Backward Classes Commission.

However, he declined to comment on the issue until the detailed order on reservation for Panchamasalis and Vokkaligas is issued by the government.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 3

Haryana Sports Minister resigns

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Facing allegations of sexual harassment by a junior athletics coach, Haryana Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Sandeep Singh resigned on Sunday.

A case was registered against him by the Chandigarh Police.

Mr. Singh said that he was handing over the Sports and Youth Affairs Department to the Chief Minister on "moral grounds".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Eight dead in separate incidents during New Year revelry

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

At least eight people died during New Year revelry in separate incidents in the State. Four from Tamil Nadu, who were returning from Goa after New Year celebrations, were killed on the spot and another injured when the car they were travelling in hit a bus near Baleguli Cross in Ankola taluk of Uttar Kannada district on Sunday.

The deceased have been identified as Arun Pandyan, Nipul, Mohammed Billal and Shekharan. Another passenger has been hospitalised. According to the police, the deceased returned from Goa after celebrations and were proceeding to Gokarna, when the mishap occurred. The car hit the road divider and then rammed into the bus coming from the opposite direction.

A youth who sustained a bullet injury following celebratory firing at a private party organised to welcome the New Year in Shivamogga, succumbed in a hospital on Sunday.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 3

Amit Shah's statement on Amul-Nandini cooperation sparks political slugfest

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Months before the State is set to go for Assembly elections, Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah's statement in Mandya on coming together of two milk cooperatives --- Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) and Gujarat-based Anand Milk Union Ltd. (AMUL) -- has led to a political slugfest.

While Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and Cooperation Minister S.T. Somashekar on Sunday clarified that the statement did not mean a merger of the two entities, the Opposition Congress and Janata Dal (S) have lashed out at Mr Shah's statement, construing that the suggestion was for merger of the two large cooperatives in the country. Mr. Shah on Friday suggested that Amul and Nandini, two successful milk unions, could work towards the welfare of country's milk producers, initiating a "white revolution".

Terming the move as injustice to Karnataka, former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy said that it was an effort to nullify Karnataka's development that is ahead of Gujarat. "Why are you (Mr. Shah) showing intolerance towards Karnataka? I suspect it is to make Kannadigas slaves of Gujarat. After subsuming Karnataka-based banks that were a model to the country, this is a hidden agenda," he said.

Amit Shah

With nearly 26 lakh milk producing members across 16 district unions, KMF has reported a turnover of nearly ₹19,800 crore in 2021-2022. Mr. Shah's pitch in Mandya comes around a time when BJP is trying to make inroads in the Vokkaliga dominated Old Mysore region, and incidentally the top five district milk unions, including Mandya, in the State are in this region. Politically too, the milk unions have played an important role in elections. Multiple leaders in both Janata Dal (S) and Congress said that the controversy would resonate in Assembly elections too.

Ex-CM too opposes idea

Another former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah also opposed it, saying any coming together of the two milk federations would result in loss of livelihood for members of Karnataka. "Eyes of the Gujarat corporates are now fixed on the golden egg laying goose. It is an attempt of the BJP to rob Karnataka," he alleged.

The concern over Mr. Shah's statement comes in the backdrop of his earlier announcement in Assam in October that the process is on to merge Amul with five milk cooperatives to form a multi-State milk cooperative society, a Congress leader pointed out.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said that Nandini would maintain its separate identity 'for hundreds of years', and that Mr. Shah had only meant that Nandini and Amul must be cooperative in technical and marketing aspects.

Widening of Hebbal flyover to restart

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After a gap of over three years, the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) will resume construction work of adding lanes to the existing Hebbal flyover from Monday.

In 2019, the works were stalled after Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (BMRCL) raised concern over the project coming in the way of the future alignment of the Namma Metro project in the area. Now, the BDA has decided to implement the project with a modified design; instead of going at level two, lanes will be added to level one. From Esteem Mall side, two additional lanes will be built after the railway track and three lanes will be constructed towards the city. The down ramp will end near Baptist Hospital and join the main lanes (traffic moving towards Mehkri Circle).

The project will help motorists coming from Kempegowda International Airport and entering the city. SUDHAKARA JAIN

The BDA officials maintain that no acquisition of land is required for the construction of additional lanes. "We recently received a green signal from BMRCL for construction of additional lanes. This will benefit motorists coming from Kempegowda International Airport side towards the city. The construction works will start from Monday. Initially, the construction of pillars will be taken up on the service road from Baptist Hospital side towards railway track," an official said. The total length of the alignment would be around 800 metres.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 3

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Ratio of corporate tax to GDP exceeds 3% in FY22 after two years

3 In percentage, the ratio of corporate tax collection to GDP, a feat that was achieved after a gap of two years in 2021-22, reflecting the overall improvement in profitability of India Inc propelled by an increase in demand for goods and services. However, the corporate tax collection is yet to surpass its five-year high of 3.51% of GDP recorded in 2018-19. PTI

'Electric-two wheeler sales likely to miss FY23 target'

20 The percentage by which electric two-wheeler sales could miss the target of 10 lakh units in fiscal 2022-23, mainly due to the withholding of around ₹1,100 crore subsidy by the government, according to industry body Society Of Manufacturers Of Electric Vehicles (SMEV). In 2022, sales of electric two-wheelers stood at around 6 lakh units. PTI

India's coal production in FY24 expected at 997 MT

997.14 In million tonnes, the quantity of coal the country is expected to produce in the coming financial year. Of the projected figure, state-owned CIL's output is likely to be 760 MT, followed by Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL) at 75 MT, and captive and others at 162.14 MT, according to government data. PTI

Over 1,000 lives lost due to use of mobile phones while driving

1,040 The number of lives lost in road accidents due to the use of mobile phones by drivers while driving in 2021, according to a Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) report. The report titled 'Road accidents in India —2021', said 555 road accidents took place due to jumping of red light which claimed 222 lives in 2021.PTI

Electricity demand surged 11% from April to November

11 The percentage by which electricity demand jumped between April-November, indicating a buoyancy in the economy while the power deficit in the country rose slightly to 0.6%. Experts say that India is a power surplus state but sometimes discoms don't have funds to afford a round-the-clock supply of electricity. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The danger of deepfakes

What are the ways in which AI-manipulated digital media can impact the lives of individuals as well as influence the public discourse? How is it employed by various groups and how can society overcome the 'infodemic'?

EXPLAINER

Ashish Jaiman

Disinformation and hoaxes have evolved from mere annoyance to warfare that can create social discord, increase polarisation, and in some cases, even influence the election outcome. Nation-state actors with geopolitical aspirations, ideological believers, violent extremists, and economically motivated enterprises can manipulate social media narratives with easy and unprecedented reach and scale. The disinformation threat has a new tool in the form of deepfakes.

What are deepfakes?

Deepfakes are digital media - video, audio, and images edited and manipulated using Artificial Intelligence. It is basically hyper-realistic digital falsification. Deepfakes are created to inflict harm on individuals and institutions. Access to commodity cloud computing, public research AI algorithms, and abundant data and availability of vast media have created a perfect storm to democratise the creation and manipulation of media. This synthetic media content is referred to as deepfakes.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Generated Synthetic media or deepfakes have clear benefits in certain areas, such as accessibility, education, film production, criminal forensics, and artistic expression. However, as access to synthetic media technology increases, so does the risk of exploitation. Deepfakes can be used to damage reputation, fabricate evidence, defraud the public, and undermine trust in democratic institutions. All this can be achieved with fewer resources, with scale and speed, and even micro-targeted to galvanise support.

Who are the victims?

The first case of malicious use of deepfake was detected in pornography. According to a *sensity.ai*, 96% of deepfakes are pornographic videos, with over 135 million views on pornographic websites alone. Deepfake pornography exclusively targets women.

New menace: Having taken cognizance of the issue, almost all social media platforms have some policy for deepfakes. ISTOCK

Pornographic deepfakes can threaten, intimidate, and inflict psychological harm. It reduces women to sexual objects causing emotional distress, and in some cases, lead to financial loss and collateral consequences like job loss.

Deepfake can depict a person as indulging in antisocial behaviors and saying vile things that they never did. Even if the victim could debunk the fake via alibi or otherwise, that fix may come too late to remedy the initial harm.

Deepfakes can also cause short-term and long-term social harm and accelerate the already declining trust in traditional media. Such erosion can contribute to a culture of factual relativism, fraying the increasingly strained civil society fabric.

Deepfake could act as a powerful tool by a malicious nation-state to undermine public safety and create uncertainty and chaos in the target country. Deepfakes can undermine trust in institutions and diplomacy.

Deepfakes can be used by non-state actors, such as insurgent groups and terrorist organisations, to show their adversaries as making inflammatory speeches or engaging in provocative actions to stir anti-state sentiments among people.

Another concern from deepfakes is the liar's dividend; an undesirable truth is dismissed as deepfake or fake news. The mere existence of deepfakes gives more credibility to denials. Leaders may weaponise deepfakes and use fake news and alternative-facts narrative to dismiss an actual piece of media and truth.

What is the solution?

Media literacy efforts must be enhanced to cultivate a discerning public. Media literacy for consumers is the most effective tool to combat disinformation and deepfakes.

We also need meaningful regulations with a collaborative discussion with the technology industry, civil society, and policymakers to develop legislative solutions to disincentivising the creation and distribution of malicious deepfakes.

Social media platforms are taking cognizance of the deepfake issue, and almost all of them have some policy or acceptable terms of use for deepfakes. We also need easy-to-use and accessible technology solutions to detect deepfakes, authenticate media, and amplify authoritative sources.

To counter the menace of deepfakes, we all must take the responsibility to be critical consumers of media on the Internet, think and pause before we share on social media, and be part of the solution to this 'infodemic'.

THE GIST

- Deepfakes are digital media - video, audio, and images edited and manipulated using Artificial Intelligence. It is basically hyper-realistic digital falsification.
- AI-Generated Synthetic media or deepfakes have clear benefits in certain areas, such as accessibility, education, film production, criminal forensics, and artistic expression.
- Collaborative actions and collective techniques across legislative regulations, platform policies, technology countermeasures, and media literacy approaches are a few of the ways in which deepfake threat can be mitigated

Has India tided over the problem of bad loans?

What is the status of non-performing assets? How does the RBI go about describing it? Have the government strategy and RBI norms helped?

K. Bharat Kumar

The story so far:

In December 2022, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told Parliament that banks had written off bad loans worth ₹10,09,511 crore during the last five financial years. A National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL) was announced in the Union Budget for 2021-2022 to resolve stressed loans amounting to about ₹2 lakh crore in phases.

What is a bad loan?

A bad loan is that which has not been 'serviced' for a certain period. Servicing a loan is paying back the interest and a small part of the principal – depending on the agreement between bank and borrower – to begin with so that over time, you pay back the principal as well as the interest accrued in the duration.

In 2009, the RBI brought out norms that set out categories of NPAs and what banks must do as these bad loans aged. Bad loans are a problem, for, with time, there is less and less certainty that the loan would be paid back in full.

The RBI's master circular in 2009 started off the journey on NPA recognition. It states that if an asset has been 'doubtful' for a certain period, the value of that asset must be provided for in parts, as the asset ages. There was a revision in October 2021 which made recognition far more stringent.

Interestingly, even if the asset is standard and there is no problem with it, banks are expected to make provisions depending on the risk element for that sector. Like home loans with teaser rates are at greater risk than those that aren't. Hence provisions have to be made for such loans.

In the last five years, how much have banks had to mark as bad loans? What has come back to the banking system?

Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad told the Rajya Sabha in December that loans written off by scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) during the last five financial years totalled ₹10.1 lakh crore. Significantly, only ₹1.32 lakh crore has been recovered. As a percentage of write-offs, this comes to only about 13%. One explanation is that if an NPA is fully recognised in a particular year, even the fastest of legal processes may not resolve for full repayment. Not only do banks take significant haircuts when it comes to recovery but the amount to be repaid post-haircut may be delayed. Time will tell whether recoveries would eventually improve.

Why is there a need to recognise NPAs?

In the banking system, the government and regulatory authorities need to have a good view of how healthy the financial system is. A weak financial system can eventually ruin lives and livelihoods. Unless we know we have a problem, how can we fix it?

India became more aggressive in recognising loans as 'bad' in the 2014 to 2015 period.

The periodic asset quality review was introduced. Further, the regulator stepped in to prevent evergreening of loans (i.e., lending more to an already stressed asset in the hope that it could be brought back to its feet).

Has recognising NPAs helped?

Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that with the transparent recognition of NPAs, this percentage for gross loans rose from 4.1% in March, 2014, to 11.46% in March 2018. She said that with the government's "strategy of recognition, resolution, recapitalisation and reforms," NPAs had since declined to 5.9% by March 2022.

THE GIST

- A bad loan is that which has not been 'serviced' for a certain period. Servicing a loan is paying back the interest and a small part of the principal.
- The Rajya Sabha was told that loans written off by scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) during the last five financial years totalled ₹10.1 lakh crore. Significantly, only ₹1.32 lakh crore has been recovered.
- The Finance Minister said that with the government's "strategy of recognition, resolution, recapitalisation and reforms," NPAs had declined to 5.9% by March 2022.

In election year, citizen groups want real problems of the people to become poll planks

Many groups are planning rallies in the run-up to polls to force parties to take a stand on the issues that concern them

WISH LIST - 2023

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

The year 2023 will be an election year in Karnataka, with Assembly polls likely in May and civic polls of Bengaluru, zilla, and taluk panchayat polls mostly later in the year.

With parties already in the campaign mode, the political temperature is steadily rising. But the narrative so far has been dominated by mud-slinging and a communally divisive agenda. Citizen groups want the real problems of the common people to become the debating points in 2023.

Harish Narasappa, of Karnataka Election Watch and Association of Democratic Reforms, said parties are getting away with no accountability and scrutiny by diverting attention to trivial issues. "It is evident in how parties treat their manifestos: as a ritual, often released just days ahead of the polls. As a first step, we need to pressurise all parties to release their manifestos two months in advance and try to hold them to account," he said.

A file photo of residents of Bengaluru performing a symbolic pooja of a pothole to draw the attention of authorities to the poor civic amenities of the city. PTI

Several groups are gearing up to hold massive rallies in the run-up to the Assembly polls, in a bid to force all parties to take a stand on the issues that concern them.

For instance, government employees are demanding the State revert to the old pension scheme. The Samyukta Horata-Karnataka, a coalition of progressive groups, is planning mass mobilisations ahead of the upcoming State Budget and Assembly elections.

"The farmers' movement in Delhi was a success because it was able to present our problems beyond caste, religion, and other divisive lines. We need to resist being diverted," said G.C. Bayyareddy, convener, Samyukta Horata - Karnataka.

Women are also lobbying for increased political representation. At the recently concluded Assembly session, Sowmya Reddy, MLA, had mooted a private member's bill seeking reservation for women in the legislature and government jobs, but it was not taken up. "Despite being an economic powerhouse, Karnataka has very low women's political representation and poor labour force participation," said Tara Krishnaswamy, co-founder of Political Shakti, a non-partisan group working for better representation of women in the political sphere.

> It is evident in how parties treat their manifestos: as a ritual, often released just days ahead of the polls. As a first step, we need to pressurise all parties to release their manifestos two months in advance and try to hold them to account.
>
> **HARISH NARASAPPA,**
> Karnataka Election Watch and Association of Democratic Reforms

Communal cauldron

Many fear that the communal cauldron may be stirred further in 2023 with hate speeches, a trend witnessed in 2022.

"We hope the election campaign is free of hate speeches. However, we know that it may only become more prevalent. We demand that the Election Commission of India act tough on those who indulge in hate speeches," said Vinay Sreenivasa, of #HateSpeechBeda campaign.

Srinivas Alavilli, head, civic participation, Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy, said: "The onus is on us to make an informed choice and give a message to the political class. Though we crib endlessly about issues plaguing the city, almost all MLAs in the city are in their third term and do not seem to face anti-incumbency. I think we need to elect new MLAs to bring the political parties to our tables," he said.

As far as the much-delayed civic polls go, the biggest wish is that it is indeed held in 2023 and not pushed any further.

Ukraine: 2 U.S. carriers defer plans on direct flights to city

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has resulted in two U.S. carriers indefinitely postponing their plans to launch direct flight services from two American cities to Bengaluru.

In February 2020, American Airlines announced the launch of a Seattle-Bengaluru service, scheduled to commence in October 2020. This was to be the first non-stop flight between Bengaluru and the United States.

Later, United Airlines also announced that it would start a direct flight between Bengaluru and San Francisco by spring 2021.

However, the COVID-19 outbreak led to the postponement of the services.

When the pandemic subsided and air travel restarted, the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacted their plans.

U.S. carriers have stopped flying over Russian air space, which has meant that American Airlines and United Airlines are yet to start flight services to Bengaluru.

But, in January 2021, Air India launched a non-stop flight connecting Bengaluru to San Francisco. This service was temporarily stopped for a while before it was resumed in December 2022.

A file photo of San Francisco International Airport (SFO) in San Francisco, California, U.S. United Airlines had announced a direct flight between Bengaluru and San Francisco by spring 2021, but the service is yet to commence. BLOOMBERG

An official at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) said that the two American airlines have not commenced services due to the ongoing war. "Most of the flights originating in the U.S. take the polar route to reach India, which means crossing Russian air space. Due to these restrictions, flights will have to take a longer route. Not all aircraft are designed to carry the amount of fuel required for such a long journey," the official explained.

According to Air India, the direct distance between Bengaluru and San Francisco is approximately 13,993 km. The cities are at diametrically opposite ends of the world, with a time zone change of approximately 13.5 hours.

"The total flight time on this route will be more than 17 hours depending on the wind speed on that particular day," the team at United Airlines had announced, while launching its service.

$250 million at stake

Another reason cited is the huge investment involved in starting a new route. "A quarter of a billion dollars goes into starting a new route. This is quite a big decision given the current circumstances," the official added.

Karnataka Public Work Department
(A Government of KarnatakaEnterprises) O/O Executive Engineer PWD Division, Hosapete, Dist:-Vijayanagara

No:EE/PWD/Dn/Hosapete/TND/2022-23/2452 Date:28/12/2022.

Short Term E-Tender Notification

Tenders are invited by undersigned on behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, PWD Division Hosapete, Vijayanagara Dist, for the work notified in the statement below. The bid shall be in Two Cover system namely technical bid and financial bid through Electronic system containing details of EMD through website www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in

Sl. No	Work Indent No	Estimate Cost (Rs in Lakhs)
1	KPWD/2022-23/BD/WORK_INDENT162354	15.00
2	KPWD/2022-23/BD/WORK_INDENT162655	10.00
3	KPWD/2022-23/BD/WORK_INDENT162661	10.00
4	KPWD/2022-23/BD/WORK_INDENT161494	601.00
5	KPWD/2022-23/BD/WORK_INDENT159434/Call-3	375.00
6	KPWD/2022-23/BD/WORK_INDENT159552/Call-3	350.00
7	KPWD/2022-23/RD/WORK_INDENT156858	562.908
8	KPWD/2022-23/BD/WORK_INDENT163248	66.78

1 Quarries of Tender On **As Per E-procurement Portal.** 2 Last Date of Tender Submission On **09/01/2023 @ 16.00 Hours**. 3 Tender Opening date On **10/01/2023 @ 16.30 Hours.** 4 Financial Bid Opening Date **As Per E-procurement Portal.**

Note: 1. Any Changes Either in Tender date or any other condition , Tenderers can view in E-procurement Portal.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
DIPR/Vijayanagar/297/MCA/2022-23 **PWD Division Hosapete, Vijayanagara District.**

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDERS (Only Through e-procurement Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Agencies for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (North), 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru-560009.

Sl No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to tender / EMD (In Rs.)	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1	Central	BWSSB/EEC/PB/2631/2022-23 Date: 30.12.2022	Rs. 11,50,215/- / Rs. 28,800/-	09.01.2023 upto 5.00 pm	10.01.2023 after 5.01 pm
2		BWSSB/EEC/PB/2633/2022-23 Date: 30.12.2022 (Reserved for SC Category)	Rs. 19,21,449/- / Rs. 24,100/-		
3		BWSSB/EEC/PB/2635/2022-23 Date: 30.12.2022	Rs. 11,85,730/- / Rs. 29,650/-		
4		BWSSB/EEC/PB/2637/2022-23 Date: 30.12.2022 (Reserved for SC Category)	Rs. 9,02,172/- / Rs. 11,300/-		
5		BWSSB/EEC/PB/2639/2022-23 Date: 30.12.2022	Rs. 9,13,766/- / Rs. 22,900/-		
6		BWSSB/EEC/PB/2641/ 2022-23 Date: 30.12.2022	Rs. 22,34,031/- / Rs. 50,000/-		
7		BWSSB/EEC/PB/2643/ 2022-23 Date: 30.12.2022	Rs. 9,28,982/- / Rs. 23,250/-		
			Sd/- Executive Engineer (Central)		
8	North East	BWSSB/EE(N-E)/TO/PB/1918/ 2022-23 Date: 30.12.2022	Rs. 22,13,884/- / Rs. 50,000/-	09.01.2023 upto 5.00 pm	10.01.2023 after 5.01 pm
			Sd/- Executive Engineer (North-East)		
Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru-560009.					
9	South West-2	BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/1147/ 2022-23 Date: 28.12.2022	Rs. 40,65,957/- / Rs. 81,400/-	07.01.2023 upto 4.00 pm	09.01.2023 after 5.00 pm
			Sd/- Executive Engineer (South West-2)		
Office of the Chief Engineer (East), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru-560009.					
10	East-1	BWSSB/EE(East)-1/PB/2338/ 2022-23 Date: 31.12.2022	Rs. 62,30,547/- / Rs. 1,24,615/-	16.01.2023 upto 4.00 pm	17.01.2023 after 5.00 pm
			Sd/- Executive Engineer (East)-1		

The Details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/3822/Zenkar/2022-23

BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Wholly owned by Government of Karnataka undertaking)
(CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438)

Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) (Through e-procurement portal only)

BESCOM invites tender against enquiry No: **BESCOM/GM-DAS/MP/2022-23/33 Dated 30.12.2022** for "Providing Manpower (Graduate Engineers and Diploma Engineers) for carrying out DAS operations at BESCOM Integrated Control Centers (BICC-1 and BICC-2) in HSR Layout and Rajajinagar, Bengaluru.

The bid documents can be obtained through e-procurement portal from **02.01.2023 16:00** Hours onwards from the website: **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in.** E-procurement helpdesk: **+91 80 46010000, +91 80 22631200** or **e-mail: support@ihelpdesk.com.**

Sd/-
General Manager (DAS)
BESCOM

For Electricity related complaints call: 1912
Download "BESCOM Mithra" Mobile APP

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN:U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No.:SEE/Tr(W&M)C/MRB/EE(O)/AEE-1/T-64/22-23/6653-61 Date:30.12.2022

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through e-Procurement Mode Only)

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited invites Tender for the following work.

1) Bid Enquiry No.:KPTCL/SEE/Tr.(W&M)C/MRB/EE(O)/AEE-1/2022-23/PTK/Balance Work Enhancement 2x12.5MVA by 2x20MVA PTR @110 KV UP Halli S/S dtd.. 16.11.2022_Call_2 for Enhancement of 2x12.5MVA, 66/11 KV Power Transformer by 2x20MVA and Providing 5 additional PCVCB switchgear at 66/11KV MUSSUP Halli, H.B.Halli Taluk, Vijayanagara District pertaining to TL&SS Division Munirabad, KPTCL Sub-station conforming to our Technical Specifications, F.O.R.D at Store/Site basis, including insurance and transportation.

2) Bid Enquiry No.:KPTCL/SEE/Tr.(W&M)C/MRB/EE(O)/AEE-1/2022-23/PTK/ Balance Work Enhancement 1x8MVA by 1x12.5MVA PTR @66KV MUSS Chornur dtd. 16.11.2022_Call_2 for Enhancement of 1x8 MVA, 66/11 KV Power Transformer by 1x12.5MVA 66/11KV Power Transformer and Providing 2 Nos. of additional PCVCB switchgear at 66KV MUSS Chornur, Sandur Taluk, Bellary District pertaining to 220KV R/S Ittigi, KPTCL pertaining to TL&SS Division Munirabad, KPTCL Sub-station conforming to our Technical Specifications, F.O.R.D at Store/Site basis, including insurance and transportation.

3) Bid Enquiry No.:SEE/Tr.(W&M)C/MRB/EE(O)/AEE-1/22-23/ TTK/110KV LILO LINE YERDONA dtd. 16.11.2022_Call_2 for Construction of 110 KV LILO line to 110/11 KV Yerdona sub-station on existing DC Towers from the tapping point of 110 KV Munirabad-II for a distance of 4.936 Kms along with Construction of Terminal bay at existing 110/11KV Yerdona Sub Station in Karatagi Tq, & Koppal District conforming to our Technical Specifications, F.O.R.D at Store/Site basis, including insurance and transportation.

4) Bid Enquiry No.:SEE/Tr.(W&M)C/MRB/EE(O)/AEE-1/22-23/TTK/20MVAR Capacity Capacitor Bank Installation @ H B Halli Dt. 19.11.2022_Call_2 for Replacement of Obsolete 20 Mvar Capacity, 66kV voltage class Capacitor Bank by new 20 Mvar Capacity, 66kV voltage class Capacitor Bank along with allied equipments at 66/11kV HagariBommanahalli sub-station in H.B Halli Taluk, Vijayanagara District on Total Turn Key Basis.

5) Bid Enquiry No.: KPTCL/SEE/Tr.(W&M)C/MRB/EE(O)/AEE-1/2022-23/PTK/ Enhancement 10 by 20 MVA PTR @110 KV Yapaldinni S/S Dt. 28.08.2022_Call-3 for Enhancement of 1X10 MVA,110/11kV Power Transformer by 1X20 MVA, 110/11kV Power Transformer at 110/11kV Yapaladinni Sub-station in Raichur Taluk and District. Including supply of equipment's / materials, erection (including civil works), testing & commissioning on PTK basis (major material Power Transformer and 11 KV Switchgears will be supplied by KPTCL)

Tenders will be received through E-Procurement mode only. The detailed notification regarding the subject enquiry in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** on hyperlink **"eProcurement-KPTCL"** or directly logging on to website **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in on or after 02.01.2023 at 11:30 Hrs.** Details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Ele),
Transmission (W&M) Circle, KPTCL, Munirabad-583 233
Tele-Fax: 08539-270094

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

Office of the Special Land Acquisition Officer-2 (Metro Rail Project),No. 14/3, 1st Floor, Aravindha Bhavana Building, Nrupathunga Road, Bengaluru-560001.

No. : KIADB/LAQ/METRO/R-6/2022-23 Date: 20.12.2022

PUBLIC NOTICE

(Under section 28(2) of KIAD Act 1966)

It is hereby given publication for the information of the public that the KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD. Bengaluru has proposed to acquire the following scheduled properties for the purpose of 2nd Phase of METRO RAIL PROJECT. The Preliminary Notification Under Section 1(3), 3(1) & 28(1) in this behalf is issued vide Notification No: CI **311** SPQ (E)**2022** Bengaluru dated **12.12.2022** by the Government of Karnataka and the same has already been published in the Karnataka Gazette dated **12.12.2022**

All the absolute owners and interested persons in the Scheduled properties specified below shall file their OBJECTIONS IF ANY to the undersigned, Notice u/s 28(2) of KIAD Act, has already been served to the notified Khatedar/Anubhavdar, interested persons. As some of the property owners refused to receive the notice and address of some of the Khatedars are not available, notices could not be served. Hence, this notice is published in the Newspapers to provide opportunity to them.

Any contracts for the disposal of the said lands by sale. Mortgage, Assignment, Exchange or otherwise or any improvement made therein without prior permission of the competent authority, after the date of publication of this notification under the provisions of KIAD Act 1966 will be disregarded while assessing compensation for such parts of the said lands as may be finally acquired.

The map of the area comprised therein and the notification specifying the lands which is proposed to be acquired may be verified in the Office of the Special Land Acquisition Officer, KIADB, (Metro Rail Project) Bengaluru during the office hours on all working days. Enquiry is fixed **on 13.01.2023 at 11.30 A.M** in the Office of the Special Land Acquisition Officer, K.I.A.D.B. (Metro Rail Project), No. 14/3, 1st Floor, Aravindha Bhavana Building, Bengaluru. Interested persons are hereby requested to be present with relevant documents. Failing which, further action will be taken in accordance with law.

SCHEDULE

Enquiry Date: 13.01.2023 Time: 11.30 a.m.

Tannery Road

Ward No: 95, Kaval Byrasandra **Village : Devarajeevanahalli/Sagayapura**
Hobli: KASABA **Taluk: Bengaluru North** **Dist: Bengaluru Nagara**

Sl. No.	Property Owner	I.D. No.	L.A/CT Sy.No.	B.B.M.P Property No.	Area acquired (sq.Mtr.)
1	Mahamad Harif S/o Mahamad ismaile	TN-R6-UG-P-14	71/1609	61-11-12	5.07
2	K.Mahamad Ikbal	TN-R6-UG-P-29B	71/1609	-	24.21
3	1.Kathoon Biyama 2.B.Abdul Rahim 3.B.Abdul Rajak	TN-R6-UG-P-35			91.00
4	K.L.Shabir S/o K.L.Rahim Saheb	TN-R6-UG-P-41	71/1609	T.P.No.290/1	5.14

Kadugondanahalli Nildana

Ward No:23, Nagawara **Village: Kadugondanahalli/ Nagawara**
Hobli: KASABA **Taluk: Bangalore North** **Dist: Bengaluru Nagara**

5	Mahamad S/o Affajal S/o Suban and Tahira sowdhi W/o P.Mahamad Affajal	AR-R6-UG-P-2 & P-3	34 36	Assessment No.34 & 36	32.62
6	P.K.Hamida Bhanu W/o P.K.Masood	AR-R6-UG-P-10	34	P.I.D.No 36/ 34/5-A-3	8.24
7	P.K.Muhamuda Bhanu W/o P.K.Abdul Rahaman And Others	AR-R6-UG-P-11	34	P.I.D.No.36/ 34/5-A-3	21.68
8	K.Rashida Bhanu W/o Mohamad Haniff And Others	AR-R6-UG-P-12	34	Khath No.36/ 34/1	25.15
9	Isimil Abil Ulla S/o Mahamad Jkriya	AR-R6-UG-P-24 / AR-R6-UG-P-25 / AR-R6-UG-P-26	30/3	-	21.22

Kadugondanahalli Nildana

Ward No:23, Nagawara **Village: Nagawara**
Hobli: KASABA **Taluk: Bangalore North** **Dist: Bengaluru Nagara**

10	1.M.Tagapadi Murugan/Muventar S/o M.Muthuswamy / 2. Tulasidharan Nayar	NG-R6-UG-P-52A	138	-	207.21 / 5.70
11	1.Mujamilla 2.Kamakshamma W/o late P.Muruges, Subramani, P.Ramaiah	NG-R6-UG-P-54 & 54B	136	-	47.00 210.10
12	Sri Syed Ashrff Ulla And Sri Syed Rehamta Ulla	NG-R6-UG-P-55A	136	-	123.15
13	K.Chandra Shekar	NG-R6-UG-P-60A	135/1	-	56.00
14	K.Ananda S/o Krishnappa	NG-R6-UG-P-61A	135/1	-	49.78

Lakkasandra Nildana

Ward No:62, Hommbegowda Nagara **Village: Adugodi**
Hobli: Beguru-1 **Taluk: Bengaluru South** **Dist: Bengaluru Nagara**

15	Ms// Queen Grniyar Private LimitedRavindra Kumar Goyakka	MI-R6-UG-P-21A	35/1396, 1395	62-64-1/2	20.00
16	Famida begum W/o late Ameer Khan	MI-R6-UG-P-31D	35	1387	24.33
17	Famida begum W/o late AmeerKhan	MI-R6-UG-P-32	35	1387	11.26

Shivajinagara Nildana

Ward No:76, Shivajinagara **Village: Shivajinagara**
Hobli: Beguru-1 **Taluk: Bengaluru North** **Dist: Bangalore Nagara**

18	Dooriswamy V. S/o P.V. Venugopal Naydu	SN-R6-UG-P-18A	83/1282	78-62-143/1	2.73

Sd/- Special Land Acquisition Officer-2, (Metro Rail Project), Nrupathunga Road, Bengaluru-560001.

A BG-BGE

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The advent of 'app-solute' chaos in NREGA under the guise of transparency

The new National Mobile Monitoring Software application is unnecessarily complicating the lives of workers and is plagued by problems that are clearly eroding the right to work

CHAKRADHAR BUDDHA
LAAVANYA TAMANG

Collateral damage: NREGA has had a higher proportion of women workers and has been pivotal in changing their working conditions. FILE PHOTO

Digitally capturing the attendance of workers employed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGREGS) has been made universal by the Centre from January 1, 2023. The Union government, arguing for transparency and accountability in May 2021, had started a pilot project to capture attendance via a mobile application, the National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS). Chakradhar Buddha and Laavanya Tamang discuss the complications arising out of the decision.

In May 2021, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) launched the National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS) app, a new application meant for "improving citizen oversight and increasing transparency" in National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) works. It is to be deployed by NREGA Mates, local women at the panchayat level who are selected and trained to monitor NREGA worksites. The main feature of the app is the real-time, photographed, geo-tagged attendance of every worker to be taken once in each half of the day. We spoke to Mates, NREGA workers, and activists across multiple States to understand their experience of the app.

Conditions affecting workers

While such an app may be useful in monitoring the attendance of workers who have fixed work timings, in most States, NREGA wages are calculated based on the amount of work done each day, and workers do not need to commit to fixed hours. This flexibility has been key to NREGA's widespread demand. However, marking attendance on the app mandates that workers are at the worksite the entire day. This causes significant difficulty for NREGA workers.

Priya Devi from Rajasthan finishes her NREGA work by 9 a.m., and then sets up a stall in the local haat to sell the produce she grows in her kitchen garden. Since the introduction of the NMMS app, she either needs to be present at the worksite all day or travel twice to mark her attendance. Ms. Devi expressed concern about losing customers at her stall in her absence. Another worker from Andhra Pradesh said her daughter was now missing school frequently because she had to take over some of her mother's chores.

NREGA has historically had a higher proportion of women workers (54.7% in FY 2021-22) and has been pivotal in changing working conditions for women in rural areas. Due to the traditional burden of household chores and care work on women, the app is likely to disproportionately affect women workers. The conditions for registering NREGA attendance on the app put them in a dilemma where they may end up foregoing NREGA work. Such a sentiment was echoed (to us) by many women workers across the country. Priya Devi, for instance, is afraid she will have to choose between the two – committing to NREGA work that occupies her full day, or staying at the market.

Other challenges

There are challenges of implementation with the NMMS as well. A stable network is a must for real-time monitoring; unfortunately, it remains patchy in much of rural India. This could lead to workers not being able to mark their attendance, and consequently lose a day of wages. Workers in Kerala and Jharkhand are already facing problems in uploading their attendance on the app due to network problems. Further, a recent NewsClick report has also highlighted the problems faced by differently-abled NREGA workers from Tamil Nadu in marking their attendance on the app.

The app has adversely impacted NREGA Mates as well. The role of a Mate was conceptualised as an opportunity to empower local women to manage attendance and work measurement in their panchayat. But now, to be a Mate, one needs to have a smartphone. This new condition disqualifies thousands of women who do not own smartphones from becoming Mates. Already women from Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh have reported being passed over for selection as Mates for this very reason. Now, smartphone-owning men are likely to be given preference as Mates. Alternatively, women could become proxy Mates – officially registered, but deferring to men who work and get paid. Many selected Mates also reported that they had not been given proper training in using the app. This could lead to errors in recording workers' attendance, that ultimately results in delayed or non-payments.

Errors in pilot process

The app had been launched on a pilot basis last year, with States using it voluntarily. Officials and activists confirmed these implementation errors had been evident throughout the pilot process. However, there is no information available publicly about the errors found and measures taken to address them. Our Right To Information applications have also not yielded any satisfactory responses. Despite the persistent errors, on May 13, 2022, the MoRD released a circular announcing that NMMS would now be mandatory for all NREGA worksites employing more than 20 workers, with no option for manual attendance other than in exceptional circumstances. Within a week of the mandate, many States submitted complaints and reports of the same errors that were seen during the pilot stage. The MoRD is yet to offer any solutions, reassurances, or even a response.

No physical records

Beyond the problems in implementation, the intended purpose of such an application, and its effectiveness remain unclear. The app claims to "increase citizen oversight" by "bringing more transparency and ensuring proper monitoring of the schemes, besides potentially enabling processing payments faster". However, it appears to be doing exactly the opposite. With no physical attendance records signed by workers anymore, workers have no proof of their attendance and work done. In the district of West Singhbhum, Jharkhand, workers reported having worked on a NREGA project, the attendance records of which do not exist on the NREGA website. Since there are no physical records the workers can use as evidence, they have no way of proving their attendance, and will consequently lose out on pay for two full weeks of work. This is a clear erosion of the transparency and citizen oversight the app claims to improve.

Corruption has been a rising problem in NREGA, with funds being siphoned off by faking attendance records. While ostensibly the NMMS's focus on real-time, geo-tagged attendance could be one way of addressing this corruption, the MoRD has not provided much clarity on either the magnitude of this corruption or the manner in which the NMMS addresses it. There are no parameters established to assess the app's performance, either on transparency, or on quicker processed payments.

Strengthen social audits

Instead of focusing on this app or introducing other complex technological reforms, we strongly believe social audits must be strengthened. Social audits are citizen-centric institutions, where the citizens of the panchayat have a direct role and say in how NREGA functions in their panchayat. Audits have worked well in the past, allowing the local rights holders to be invested in decisions, and hold the administration accountable themselves. But instead of strengthening citizen-centric institutions such as social audit units and gram sabhas, the MoRD seems keener on introducing technological reforms that can be complex to understand and fundamentally inaccessible for workers.

It seems ironic that an application meant to improve citizen oversight and transparency was implemented with no consultation and discussion with NREGA workers, functionaries, or government field officials. The NMMS is consequently blind to the actual functioning of NREGA on the ground. The MoRD's habit of passing reforms with no stakeholder consultation does not fall in line with the principles of transparency and citizen-participation enshrined in NREGA. The NMMS has very clear problems that will make it increasingly difficult for workers to continue working under NREGA, eroding the right to work that underwrites the NREGA Act.

Chakradhar Buddha and Laavanya Tamang are affiliated with LibTech India

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

'Nightmare' and its evil spirit connect

A likely reasoning for why people get up gasping for breath when they have a nightmare

S. Upendran

"Hey, Happy New Year! What time did you get back from the party last night?"

"I didn't even go. A couple of friends called to say that traffic was a nightmare."

"Nightmare? Isn't a nightmare a terrifying dream?"

"Yes, but the word can be used in other contexts as well. When you say that traffic was a nightmare, what you're suggesting is that it was terrible. Driving in it was an unpleasant and frightening experience."

"I see. How about this example? My sister's trip to the U.S. turned into a nightmare when she missed her connecting flight in London."

"That's a good example. When I asked Anil how the interview was, he said it was a nightmare."

"That's his usual reply. Tell me, where does the word 'nightmare' come from?"

"The word is made up of two words - night and mare. We all know..."

"We all know what 'night' means. A female horse is usually referred to as 'mare', right?"

"Right! But 'mare', in this case, doesn't refer to a female horse, but an evil female spirit."

"Female spirit? Is it this evil spirit which causes us to have bad dreams?"

"That's right! What this female spirit does is to sit on people who are sleeping. It tries to suffocate them."

"By sitting on them? That's interesting! I guess this explains why people get up gasping for breath when they have a nightmare."

"It certainly does. Anyway, how did you spend New Year's Eve? Did you go anywhere?"

"I did. Sujatha had a little get together, and she invited me over. Anjali was there, too."

"Sujatha and Anjali! Nice way to end the year, I guess. They must have had a lot of fun needling you."

"Needling me? What are you talking about?"

"When you needle someone, you deliberately annoy or embarrass the person."

"How do I do that? By making fun of them?"

"You achieve this by making fun of them continuously. Or you could try and upset them by making rather nasty remarks."

"That's something both Anjali and Sujatha are good at. They always needle me by talking about the terrible marks I used to get in Physics while I was in school."

"And now, poor Mythreye is their new victim. They needle her about her weight."

"Yes. The interesting thing is Mythreye knows that the two are saying things just to needle her. But no matter how hard she tries, she always ends up losing her temper."

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz on the women who made the news in 2022

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Women have made history and headlines with many triumphs and victories in 2022. As we welcome the new year, here is a quiz on women and their achievements.

QUESTION 1

Three countries that did not have a single women parliamentarian in the previous year broke the cycle and elected them in 2022. Name the three countries.

QUESTION 2

This actress made history by becoming the first openly queer woman of colour to win an Oscar in the acting category. In her speech, she thanked Rita Moreno for paving the way for women of colour in the industry. Name the actress and the film she won the award for.

QUESTION 3

In a recent viral video, two important leaders shut down a press person's sexist question with a firm and fiery response. "I wonder whether or not anyone asked Barack Obama and John Key if they meet because they are of similar age…" Who said this?

QUESTION 4

Emma Tucker was named the editor-in-chief of which newspaper. She will be the first woman to head the 133-year-old publication.

QUESTION 5

Massive protests broke out in Iran after the death of a young woman after she was detained by the country's 'morality police'. Prior to this another country witnessed protests over wearing Hijabs. Name the country and the specific State where the protests began.

QUESTION 6

Droupadi Murmu became the first tribal woman to hold the office of the President. Before becoming the President, she held portfolios as a Minister of which State?

This Indian team won gold for which sport at the Commonwealth Games 2022 held at Birmingham, U.K.? Which team did they beat? GETTY IMAGES

Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

1. The Hindi word 'chaatna', meaning 'to lick' has led to a genre of popular street food. Name the food. **Ans: Chaat**
2. A batter made of rice and urad dal is steamed to make this soft, spongy and savoury snack found all over Gujarat. **Ans: Dhokla**
3. In general, Goan cuisine is known for its abundance usage of fresh seafood, but one of Goan speciality includes this spicy dish that features pork, What's one of its most famous dish? **Ans: Vindaloo**
4. By what popular name do we know a tempered mix of spices(noun) and the same word also is a verb describing the act of tempering spices in hot oil ? **Ans: Tadka**
5. A popular breakfast of Karnataka that is a combination of kesari bath (sweet) and Khara bath (spicy rava upma). **Ans: Chow-Chow Baath**

Visual: The man who passed away recently whose claim on the popular food dish he invented has always met with polemics in India! **Ans: Ali Ahmed Aslam the Inventor of Chicken Tikka Masala**

Early Birds

Sushma Gupta - Bharat Yadav - Seema Magnur - Apoorva Maniktala

Word of the day

Fudge:
tamper, with the purpose of deception

Synonyms: manipulate, falsify, fake

Usage:
He fudged the figures in the account.

Pronunciation: bit.ly/fudgenew

International Phonetic Alphabet: /fʌdʒ/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, JAN. 02		
RISE	06:42	SET 18:05
RISE	14:28	SET 02:38
TUESDAY, JAN. 03		
RISE	06:42	SET 18:05
RISE	15:12	SET 03:30
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 04		
RISE	06:43	SET 18:06
RISE	15:58	SET 04:22

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	30	20
Mysuru	31	16
Bengaluru	29	16

Bengaluru Today
28°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be comfortable but humid. Night will be cool.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
29°C A dry weather to continue. Day will be slight warm and humid. Night will be cool.

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THE HINDU
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Metro collected ₹1.17 crore in fines for oversized luggage in five years

In the last five years, the highest amount in heavy baggage penalties [over ₹36.7 lakh] was collected in 2022

Jahnavi T.R.
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has collected ₹1.17 crore in penalties for oversized luggage in the last five years.

With work happening on the much anticipated airport line, commuters are worried about having to shell out extra money, to carry their heavier bags on the metro.

In the last five years, the highest amount in heavy baggage penalties, over ₹36.7 lakh, was collected in 2022.

While a little over ₹36 lakh was collected in 2018, it came down to over ₹29 lakh in 2019. Even though it went further down during the lockdown years, in 2022 it went up again.

It is noteworthy that the metro stations from where the maximum fine has been collected are all located near bus and railway stations. While the Yeshwanthpur station holds the top spot, it is followed by Chickpete, Kempegowda, Baiyyappanahalli, and Yelachenahalli.

BMRCL guidelines for luggage

- One luggage per person
- Maximum dimension – 60 cm x 45 cm x 25 cm (length x breadth x height)
- Extra/additional and oversized baggage - ₹30 per baggage

Fine collected by BMRCL in the last five years for oversized/extra luggage

Year	Amount (In ₹)
2018	36,05,906
2019	29,43,497
2020	8,41,260
2021	6,50,781
2022	36,75,304
Total	**1,17,16,748**

BMRCL officials said that the baggage restrictions are in place to ensure a safe and comfortable commute for all passengers. "If the dimensions of the luggage are bigger than the scanners at our operating stations, then the penalty is levied," an official explained.

Recently, in a debate on social media about the luggage penalty, many supported the move, while others were worried about how this would cause apprehension among people who would like to use public transport.

"In today's time, there is encouragement from all corners to utilise public transport. Penalising for extra baggage discourages us from doing that as it is quite natural to have bigger bags or suitcases after long travels. While we are excited about the upcoming airport line, if such restrictions are present, then many people who travel might have to pay the penalty and hence think twice before taking the metro," said Madhukar K., an IT employee from Banashankari.

The officials said that appropriate steps will be taken to address the needs of airport travellers, by the time the line becomes operational.

"The airport also has its own restrictions when it comes to baggage. Considering those regulations, we will have rules which will benefit the commuters," said Yashwant Chawan, spokesperson, BMRCL.

Police Commissioner C.H. Pratap Reddy, Special Commissioner, Traffic, M.A. Saleem and other police officers during the New Year celebrations in Bengaluru on Sunday. K. MURALI KUMAR

78 drunken driving cases booked

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The traffic police registered a total of 78 drunken driving cases from in and around the city on New Year's Eve.

Thanking motorists for driving responsibly, Special Commissioner of Police, Traffic, M.A. Saleem attributed this to positive response from the people and strict enforcement.

The traffic police, a day before the the new year celebrations, had requested people visiting CBD areas on December 31 night to use public transport.

As a result, metro services, BMTC buses, and autorickshaws were operating at high capacities, while the movement of private vehicles in the CBD areas was minimal.

According to rough estimates, close to 1 lakh people visited in and around M.G. Road and if everyone had their private vehicles, the area would have choked, a police officer said.

Devotees attend morning prayers on the occasion of the New Year at St. Mary's Basilica Church in Shivajinagar on Sunday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Businessman found dead, blames BJP MLA in note

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 47-year-old businessman was found dead on Sunday and the police said that he left behind a note blaming Arvind Limbavali, BJP leader and MLA, and five others for taking this extreme step.

The deceased has been identified as Pradeep S., a resident of Haraluru. According to the police, he had gone to a resort in Nettigere with his family to celebrate the New Year.

The police said that in the note, it was stated that he had invested close to ₹2 crore with two people, mentioned as Gopi and Somaiah, to start a resort in HSR Layout.

The duo allegedly promised to make him a partner but later cheated him. Mr. Limbavali, who mediated and resolved the dispute, asked Mr. Gopi and Mr. Somaiah to return the money, but he only received a few lakhs. Mr. Limbavali later did not help him as promised, Mr. Pradeep alleged in the letter.

Due to this, Mr. Pradeep incurred a huge financial loss and could not repay his loan, said the police.

The Kaggalipura police have taken up a case of unnatural death and are investigating.

(Those in distress or those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani Ph.: 104 for help.)

Jayadeva's satellite centre completes 100 angiograms in over two months

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

The 50-bed satellite centre of the Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research (SJICSR) in K.C. General Hospital, inaugurated in October, has completed 100 angiograms. This apart, 32 angioplasties and stenting procedures have been done at the centre so far.

Doctors at the satellite centre, which has come as a boon to patients with cardiac emergencies requiring the golden hour treatment in Central Bengaluru, see over 75 patients in the out-patient department (OPD) here every day.

The compact cardiac centre, set up on an equip, operate, and manage (EOM) model, has 20 ICU beds and 30 general wards. Facilities such as ECHO, treadmill, ECG, and a cath lab are also available.

SJICSR Director C.N. Manjunath said a total of over 3,000 patients have been seen and 2,300 echocardiograms have been done here so far.

"While the load on the main Jayadeva institute is also increasing by the day, nearly 50 echocardiograms are being done daily at the satellite centre. Most importantly, this centre has come as a boon for cardiac evaluation of patients undergoing non-cardiac surgeries," Dr. Manjunath said.

"Many patients from other departments in K.C. General Hospital undergoing non-cardiac surgeries, who otherwise were referred to the main Jayadeva or other cardiac facilities for an evaluation, are now seen and assessed at the centre itself," he said.

The DNB postgraduate residents in medicine and anesthesia of K.C. General Hospital are posted at the centre and are getting good cardiology exposure, Dr. Manjunath said.

With the inauguration of the 350-bed Infosys Foundation cardiac hospital complex on the premises of the main Jayadeva campus, the institute is now better equipped to accommodate the increasing daily caseload for cardiac emergencies and elective cardiac care.

Meanwhile, the foundation stone for the Hubballi Jayadeva branch is likely to be laid on January 12.

"Although the plan was to construct a 350-bed hospital there, the actual bed strength will be 435 now as per the design. The estimated cost of the project is ₹250 crore and 9.36 acres of land have been handed over to us at Rayanala Hubballi-Dharwad sector," Dr. Manjunath added.

Scientists in Kodagu develop new avocado variety

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

As the demand for avocado, popularly known as butter fruit, is increasing, scientists at the Central Horticultural Experiment Station (CHES) in Kodagu have developed a new variety called 'Arka Coorg Ravi', which will further improve coffee-based avocado cultivation in the district.

According to scientists in CHES, the new variety will have 80% pulp and the rest seed, making the fruit profitable for farmers.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Madhu G.S, scientist in CHES, said: "Avocado, which is described as a miracle fruit for its health and nutritional benefits, is now also in huge demand in the cosmetic industry. The fruit is used in many skincare products. We have researched and developed Arka Coorg Ravi, which will help farmers in the district. The fruit is grown on about 500 hectares in Kodagu amidst the coffee plantations and the area of cultivation has seen a rise in recent years."

The CHES recently started distributing the Arka Coorg Ravi grafts to the farmers. The centre has already developed 30,000 avocado grafts which have been distributed to farmers in the district. "The new variety developed by the CHES will have at least 450 to 600 grams of weight per avocado, which will make the fruit profitable. Seedlings take 10 years to give yield, while graft plants start yielding from at least in the seventh year," S. Rajendran, scientist, CHES Chettalli in Kodagu told *The Hindu*.

Recently, the CHES had a farmer-scientist interaction on the cultivation techniques of avocados in the district. According to CHES, farmers from different parts of Karnataka and also from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana have been purchasing avocado saplings or grafts to grow in their State. Since Kodagu district saw two natural calamities in 2018 and 2019, which caused huge losses to farmers, especially coffee growers, they are now growing avocados on the coffee plantations.

According to scientists in CHES, the new variety will have 80% pulp and the rest seed. DARSHAN DEVAIAH B.P.

Earlier, as part of crop diversification, the farmers in Kodagu were growing 'Coorg mandarin' oranges, grown as a mixed crop on the estates along with coffee and black pepper.

However, in the past few years, the Coorg mandarin cultivation is coming down due to the threat of citrus greening disease.

From Page One

'Work on Kalasa-Banduri project will start soon'

On Union Home Minister Amit Shah's reported proposal on the merger of Nandini with Amul brand of milk products, Mr. Joshi clarified that his statement has been misinterpreted. "What Mr. Shah mentioned is about joint marketing. He wanted Nandini to join hands with Amul in marketing so that it can extend its market together with Amul. There is no question of merger of Amul with KMF, he said.

Widening of Hebbal flyover to restart

The BDA has already informed the city traffic police seeking diversion of traffic on the service road to facilitate the work. "For construction of pillars on the service road, there is a need for partial diversion of traffic on the service road. There is no requirement of complete prohibition on traffic movement on the service road. Maybe one lane of the road is required for the construction work," the official said.

There are many shops and government educational institutions located on the service road and a BMTC bus stop is also allocated in the area. Motorists coming from Hebbal Railway Station side and people living in residential areas use the service road to move towards Mehkri Circle.

The project is being executed by the old contractor. The BDA had awarded a contract for construction of additional lanes and building a unidirectional underpass for traffic coming from Tumakuru Road side and moving towards K.R. Puram. The total project cost is estimated at ₹87 crore. This project will be taken up at a later stage. In future, the BMRCL will dismantle the loop located on the eastern side of the flyover being used by motorists coming from K.R. Puram and entering the city to facilitate Namma Metro project under phase III.

Hebbal flyover was opened for motorists in 2003. It is a gateway for the city for the traffic coming from the northern part of the city to enter the CBD areas. After the commissioning of Kempegowda International Airport in 2008, followed by the opening of the expressway by the NHAI, the Hebbal Flyover turned into a major traffic gridlock over the years.

Recently, the State government announced the construction of additional flyovers and loops to decongest the area. For the time being, the BDA has decided to resume the projects that were stalled in 2019.

Bhoomi puja for resumption works was performed by Chairperson of BDA S.R. Vishwanath in the presence of former Union Minister Sadananda Gowda and other elected representatives on Sunday.

Eight dead during New Year revelry

The person who accidentally opened fire with his double barrel gun, also died of heart attack within a few minutes of the incident on the night of Saturday.

Manjunath Olekar, 67, had organised the party at his residence in Kote Police Station limits. Manjunath's son and his friends had gathered for the party. As part of the celebrations, Manjunath had plans to open fire in the air. However, he accidentally fired at Vinay, 34, leaving him injured. According to the police, the incident happened accidentally while Manjunath was loading the gun.

Manjunath, who was in shock after the incident, died following a heart attack on Saturday night. Vinay, who had suffered injury, was admitted to a hospital in the city. He succumbed on Sunday afternoon. Kote police have registered a case.

In Bengaluru, a 38-year-old factory worker was killed after he slipped from the terrace of a four-storeyed building in Kamakshipalya on Saturday night. The deceased Srikanth Patra, a native of Odisha and working as a machine operator in a bag manufacturing unit, was living in a rented house in Kottigepalya.

The Kamakshipalya police have registered a case of unnatural death and are investigating to ascertain if there was any foul play in the incident.

In another incident, a 28-year-old man was allegedly killed by his friends in an inebriated state over a trivial row during celebrations in Chintamani in the wee hours of Sunday.

The deceased Naveen Reddy had gone to party with his friends in a dhaba. They got drunk and started to argue over a trivial row. In the melee, one of the friends smashed a beer bottle on Naveen's head, following which he started bleeding severely. Sensing trouble, they escaped. The staff of the dhaba rushed Naveen to a nearby hospital before alerting the police, while the doctors declared Naveen as brought dead.

Text & Context
A weekday feature on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and a quiz. In the latest issue (January 2, Tuesday), the following explainer is available:

- The danger of deepfakes
bit.ly/deepfaketnc

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access this article. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access the article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

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INBRIEF

Senior officials wish Chief Minister for New Year

Senior officials of the State met Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai here on Sunday to wish him on the occasion of New Year. A release said that the informal meeting with officials included Chief Secretary Vandita Sharma and senior police officials. The Chief minister also released a calender on the occasion brought out by the NSS.

Shah has indicated State BJP unit cannot ensure win: DKS

Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday said Union Home Minister Amit Shah, during his two-day State visit, has told the truth and acknowledged that administration was not good in Karnataka, no one in the BJP was ready to take up leadership role, and they cannot win elections with the current leadership. "He has told the truth that they will face election under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I compliment him for telling the truth. Because we will face election under collective leadership, the BJP is bringing in the Prime Minister. Mr. Shah's statement points at the failure of administration under three years of BJP rule," he said.

Among southern States, Karnataka tops in distribution of Kisan Credit Cards

It also stands first in disbursal of farm loan. KCC scheme was introduced to provide timely credit support from banking system under single window

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

Among five States in southern India, Karnataka has the highest operative Kisan Credit Cards (KCCs) issued by cooperative banks, regional rural banks, and commercial banks with the total number of issued cards standing at 47.37 lakh by the end of March 2022.

The outstanding amount under all KCCs of three types of banks in Karnataka stood at ₹1,75,226.10 crore.

The KCC scheme was introduced in 1998 for providing adequate and timely credit support from the banking system under a single window with flexible and simplified procedures to the farmers for their cultivation and related activities.

Individual farmers/joint borrowers who are owner cultivators; tenant farmers, oral lessees & sharecroppers; self-help groups or Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) of farmers are eligible to get KCCs.

The total number of Kisan Credit Cards issued in the State stands at 47.37 lakh by the end of March 2022. FILE PHOTO

A.P. is second

Andhra Pradesh secured second position and all banks issued 45.77 lakh KCCs (₹56,125.33 crore), followed by Telangana - 42.73 lakh (₹40,611.34 crore), Tamil Nadu - 30.55 lakh (₹31,609.25crore) and Kerala - 19.37 lakh (₹27,953.85 crore), according to the Reserve Bank of India's "Report on Trends and Progress of Banking in India 2021-22", which was released recently.

States	Number of KCCs (in lakhs)	Amount (in ₹ crore)
Karnataka	47.37	1,75,226.1
Andhra Pradesh	45.77	56,125.33
Telangana	42.73	40,611.34
Tamil Nadu	30.55	31,609.25
Kerala	19.37	27,953.85

When it comes to cooperative banks, again Karnataka topped the list with an existence of operative of 31.25 lakh KCCs by the end of March 2022.

The number of operative KCCs increased by two lakh from 29.25 lakh in 2021 to 31.25 lakh in 2022 in Karnataka.

The recovery of loans issued by cooperative banks in Karnataka recorded at 95.1% against the southern region's average of 90.9% as on June 2020.

The number of operative cards issued by cooperative banks in Tamil Nadu are 17.44 lakh, followed by Andhra Pradesh - 15.35 lakh, Telangana - 9.28 lakh and Kerala - 6.67 lakh.

The cooperative banks' outstanding under operative KCCs in Karnataka's was ₹1,44,511.43 crore by March end 2022, followed by ₹12,136.26 crore in Andhra Pradesh, ₹9,124.19 crore in Tamil Nadu, ₹4,968.60 crore in Telangana, and ₹5,324.11 crore in Kerala in 2022.

RRBs in various States

The number of operative KCCs issued by Regional Rural Banks is highest in Telangana at 14.65 lakh followed by Andhra Pradesh - 9.46 lakh, Karnataka - 6.68 lakh, and Kerala - 6.65 lakh cards. The amount outstanding under operative KCCs under RRBs in Telangana was ₹12,695.94 crore, ₹11,701.01 crore in Karnataka, ₹11,569.01 crore in A.P., and ₹502.40 crore in T.N..

The number of operative KCCs issued by commercial banks in Karnataka are 9.44 lakh, Kerala 9.05 lakh, Andhra Pradesh 20.96 lakh, Tamil Nadu 12.73 lakh, and Telangana 18.8 lakh.

Commercial banks disbursed ₹19,013.66 crore, Kerala - ₹17,068.52 crore, Andhra Pradesh ₹32,420 crore, Tamil Nadu - ₹21,982.65 crore, and Telangana - ₹22,946 crore by March end, 2022.

The number of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies in Karnataka stands at 1,274, involving an amount of ₹11,214 lakh. The number of viable PACS are 4,303, potentially viable 1,570, dormant PACS 106, defunct 50 and others 219, the report said.

There will be clarity once final order on reservation comes out, says Bommai

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday said that everything will become crystal clear when the final order on reservation for Panchamasali and Vokkaliga communities is issued and also clarified that there will be no injustice to any community.

Speaking to presspersons in Hubballi on Sunday, Mr. Bommai said that the government has explained its stand in the interim order and the final statistics will be revealed in the final order.

"Once the final order is issued, it will be discussed with all stakeholders," he said.

Clarification

Mr. Bommai clarified that considering various aspects, the interim report of the commission has been accepted and if required, a clarification will also be issued. But everything will be clear in the final order, he said.

Reacting to Congress leader Siddaramaiah's remarks on the issue, he said that when in power, Mr. Siddaramaiah did nothing to fulfil these long-pending demands and now that the BJP government is doing it, it has become a problem for him.

Mahadayi issue

On the Mahadayi issue, he said that the issue, for which both the BJP and the Congress have fought, was not going towards a logical end even after 25 years.

"However, finding fault with the latest development only reveals the mindset of the Congress. We are not bothered about the criticism. The way ahead is clear. Detailed Project Report is cleared. We will get assent from the Finance Department and proceed with the work," he said.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Lost in translation

Come elections, and political leaders from the Centre deploy party functionaries as translators when addressing the public who don't understand their language. And so it was at a rally in Mandya addressed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, last week.

Mr. Shah, in his bid to break ice with the mainly Kannada-speaking rural audience, greeted them with "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" but the response was feeble. Mr. Shah asked whatever had happened to the voice of the people of Mandya as they were not audible.

But the enthusiasm of the translator got the better of him and he went on to exhort the crowd to "shout Bharat Mata Ki Jai loudly." An irked Mr. Shah admonished the translator and asked him to stick to what was said. Not that he knew Kannada, but the advice to raise the slogan was a give away.

When Mr. Shah asked the crowd whether they were fully vaccinated for COVID-19, it was translated as, ''We have to question both the Congress and the JD(S)", which evoked a loud boo from the audience who spotted the error, though Mr. Shah missed it.

That translation is an art and not everyone's cup of tea is something which will hit the leaders time and again in the election season.

Age is but a number

Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah's (*in picture*) age came in for some mirthful discussion in the Legislative Assembly last week in Belagavi. Congratulating senior member R.V. Deshpande for being awarded the Best Legislator, Mr. Siddaramaiah said that though there was not much difference in the age between him and Mr. Deshpande, latter looked older.

Immediately, Krishna Byre Gowda, Congress member, stood up and said he had doubts about Mr. Siddaramaiah age (75 years) and his birth certificate did not appear to be genuine. Mr Gowda continued and said MP Rahul Gandhi too had expressed doubts about Mr Siddaramaiah's age at a recent meeting in Hubballi, and said, "It is very difficult to believe that you are 75."

Speaker Vishweshwara Hegde Kageri suggested formation of a House committee to probe the correct age of the former Chief Minister. Mr. Siddaramaiah told the Speaker to set up the panel headed by Mr. Gowda to probe his correct age.

Finally, Mr. Siddaramaiah agreed that there could be a 5-6 months difference between the real and official age. "But my school teacher had written down the date of birth as August 3, 1947."

Sand mining

By choosing not to appeal against a High Court of Karnataka order that set aside cancellation of sand extraction permits from rivers in the Coastal Regulation Zone, the Dakshina Kannada district administration has opened floodgates for unbridled sand extraction from Phalguni and Netravathi rivers by issuing permits to a whopping 202 so-called traditional sand extractors.

NGT's Southern Bench on May 18 last year ruled that selling sand extracted from rivers in the CRZ amounts to mining, which was a commercial activity. The CRZ notification of the Union government specifically prohibits any kind of commercial activities inside CRZ and hence extracted sand could not be sold, the Tribunal had said.

While environmentalists had heaved a sigh of relief that the river beds subjected to constant sand extraction could be preserved, the extractors approached the High Court challenging the order. The court on September 3 and October 10, quashed the May 21 order saying NGT order passed with respect to Udupi district could not be applied to DK district.

Without challenging this order that could dent the fragile ecology in the coast before the Supreme Court, the administration not only restored permits of 148 persons, but also issued 54 fresh permits.

R. Krishna Kumar
Nagesh Prabhu
Anil Kumar Sastry

Mexico seeks ISRO's help to build and launch satellite

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Mexican Space Agency (AEM) has sought the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) help to build and launch a remote sensing satellite for Mexico.

The request seeking ISRO's support was made at a recent meeting between ISRO Chairman S. Somanath and Dr. Salvador Landeros Ayala, Director General of AEM. According to ISRO, the AEM chief sought India's support in building and launching a remote sensing satellite for Mexico. The Indian space agency said that it will work on this proposal with the Ministry of External Affairs' (MEA) support.

"Both heads of the agencies discussed the ongoing cooperation activities mainly in earth observation. While thanking ISRO for developing a mobile application for forest fire monitoring and sharing it with the Mexican Forest Department, AEM chief sought India's support in building and launching a remote sensing satellite for Mexico," said ISRO.

Ambassador of India to Mexico Dr. Pankaj Sharma, Ambassador of India to Mexico and Gustavo A. Cabrera Rodriguez, Ambassador of Mexico for the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency (ALCE) also participated in the meeting. ISRO said that in the meeting India's interest in expanding space cooperation in the Latin American and Caribbean region through ALCE was also discussed.

In June last year, ISRO and AEM signed a Scientific Cooperation Agreement on Crop Monitoring and Capacity Building and in 2014 the two space agencies had signed a Memorandum of Understanding for peaceful purposes. As per the agreement, the two space agencies would explore the development of remote sensing techniques for crop monitoring using Earth Observation data for the United Mexican States.

SMK urges govt. to name expressway after Nalwadi

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Former Chief Minister S.M. Krishna has urged the government to name the newly constructed Bengaluru-Mysuru highway after Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar, who ruled the erstwhile Mysore kingdom between 1902 to 1940.

Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar's farsighted policies were etched in the minds of millions of people of Bengaluru and Mysuru, Mr. Krishna said while recalling his contributions and requesting the authorities to name highway - NH 275 - after the ruler.

He has written to Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday.

Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Kolar Division,
Kolar-563101 Phone No. 08152-222022, Fax No.: 08152-227443
e-mail: eepwdkolar07@gmail.com website:www.kpwd.gov.in
e-portal: http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in

e-tender Notification-K.W 4
Short-term Re-Tender Notification
No.33/2022-23 Dt:26.12.2022-5th Call

Tender is invited through e-Procurement for the road works in the limits of Srinivasapura Taluk, Kolar District Public Works Department from the Registered Contractors under **H/A:5054- MDR improvements.** Amount put to tender: **Rs.117.29 Lakhs.** EMD Amount: **Rs.2.00 Lakhs** Period for completion of work: **9 months.** Contractors may download the tender documents KW-4 from Karnataka State e-Procurement portal **(viz.,http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in).** Filled in tenders shall be uploaded **on or before 4.00 p.m. on 06.01.2023** through Karnataka State e-Procurement portal. Tender received will be opened **after 4.30 p.m. on 07.01.2023** in e-Procurement. Further details regarding the works and also for details about this tender notification please contact e-Procurement portal and also you may contact this office during working hours.

Note: Any changes in this Notification will be published in e-portal only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Kolar
DIPR/Kolar/R.O.No.451/MC&A/2022-23

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KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through e-Procurement Mode only)
No. 908/BGK/SEE/AEE(Civil)/Tr.(W&M)/22-23/5859-72 **Date: 30.12.2022**

KPTCL invites bids for Capital Civil Engineering works coming under the jurisdiction of Superintending Engineer (Elecl), Transmission (W&M) Circle, KPTCL, Bagalkot.

The detailed notifications regarding the above Civil Engineering Works enquiry in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website: **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** on hyperlink "e-procurement-KPTCL" or to **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **5.30 PM on 31.12.2022** other details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

TENDER NOTIFICATION
No. 908/BGK/SEE/AEE(Civil)/Tr.(W&M)/22-23/5845-58 **Date: 30.12.2022**

KPTCL invites bids for Repairs and Maintenance of Civil Engineering Works coming under the jurisdiction of Superintending Engineer (Elecl), Transmission (W&M) Circle, KPTCL, Bagalkot.

The detailed notifications regarding the works called through brief tender notification will be displayed on the office Notice Board from the office of the undersigned on or after 1**0.00 AM on 31.12.2022.** Other details can be obtained from this office during the office hours.

Sd/- **Superintending Engineer (Ele), Transmission (W&M) Circle, KPTCL, Opp. Sector No. 45, Zonal Office Complex, Navanagara, Bagalkot-587103. Ph: 08354-236032, 236029.**

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CHANGE OF NAME

I Anusuri Mrudula Krishna W/O, Kuppala Ranjith Kumar R/o D-46, 4th Floor, Zonasha Elegance Phase-2, Harlur Road, B'lore-560102 have changed my name to Kuppala Mrudula Krishna vide affidavit dt 31.12.2022 before Notary B M Chandrashekar.

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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

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(1936 - 2022)
OUR BELOVED FATHER ATTAINED ACHARYAN THIRUVADI
ON 30TH DECEMBER 2022
MAY HE REST IN ETERNAL PEACE
FROM VARADAN FAMILY
M O B: 99801 30240

DEATH

MEERA SETHURAMAN
(AK Meerabai -Nagari)
07-05-1933 - 01-01-2023
D/o Late Shri Anam Kanniah Naidu, Nagari
W/o - Late Shri V. Sethuraman
Retd. Joint Director of Agriculture
M/o V.R.V. Sriprasad left for her heavenly abode on
Sunday 1 January 2023.
She was a proud Queen Marian & a social worker.
Contact - 9632475955

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DONATE EYES - GIFT SIGHT

Field verification for ESZ may turn futile in Kerala

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

The mammoth exercise of field verification of the map of the Ecologically Sensitive Zone (ESZ) undertaken across Kerala would end up as a futile exercise as the State government has already fulfilled the two criteria put forth by the Supreme Court for dilution of ESZ norms.

The State has already completed the satellite survey of the buffer zone and moved the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) and the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change six months ago for excluding the human habitations from the purview of ESZ.

Rajesh Kumar Sinha, the then Principal Secretary (Forest), had written to the CEC and the Ministry on June 25 last year seeking to approve the proposals marking the ESZ as zero in human habitations.

In his letter, the official had requested the Ministry to forward the proposals to the Supreme Court "for getting dilution in the minimum width of the ESZ in view of overwhelming public interest."

Fight for land: The All Kerala Catholic Congress taking out a march in Idukki demanding physical and field surveys of ESZs .FILE PHOTO

The Supreme Court, which proposed a uniform ESZ of one kilometre from the forest boundaries in its June 3 order, had suggested that the States could seek relaxation in ESZ in the overwhelming public interest.

The court had also indicated that the CEC and the Ministry shall consider the requests from the States and submit them to the court along with their recommendations, pointed out sources.

The State was forced to organise field verification of the map prepared by the Kerala State Remote Sensing and Environment Centre following the widespread complaints from those living in areas close to protected forests.

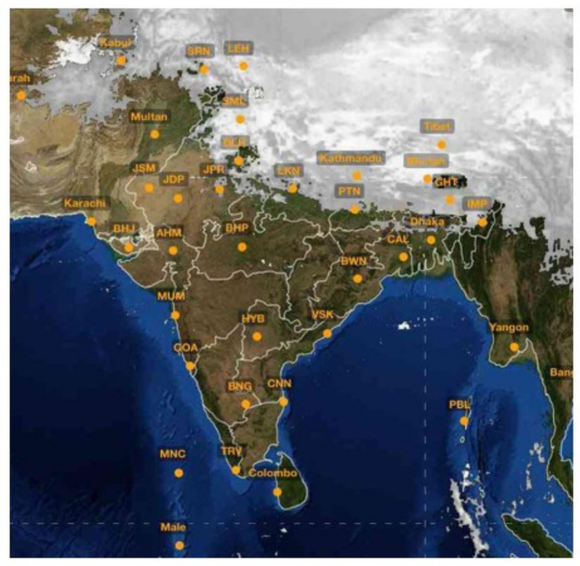
Though the map would be sufficient to be presented in the apex court, the State could use the data from field verification to allay the fears of the general public and to substantiate its claim for excluding those areas from the ESZ, sources hinted.

Meanwhile, the State Forest secretary has so far received over 24,000 complaints regarding the ESZ. While most of the complaints argued against the demarcation, around 9,000 complaints highlighted either the wrongful inclusion or exclusion of holdings in the zone.

Help desks were constituted in around 80 villages to look into the complaints, sources indicated.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Dense to very dense fog likely in some pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Bihar; in isolated pockets over Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Cold wave to severe cold wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over northern parts of Rajasthan.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	23.3	11.7
Ahmedabad	—	27.6	13.0
Aizawl	—	—	6.5
Allahabad	—	25.1	10.5
Bengaluru	—	29.0	15.9
Bhopal	—	24.7	10.6
Bhubaneswar	—	29.8	19.8
Chandigarh	—	17.8	7.4
Chennai	—	31.1	22.4
Coimbatore	—	30.7	19.5
Dehradun	—	22.4	6.0
Gangtok	—	22.5	6.5
Goa	—	31.6	21.1
Guwahati	—	24.5	10.2
Hubballi	—	31.0	18.0
Hyderabad	—	32.4	20.4
Imphal	—	21.2	5.4
Jaipur	—	21.7	6.7
Kochi	—	31.4	22.8
Kohima	—	—	4.8
Kolkata	—	26.0	17.0

CITY	
Kozhikode	—..34.3..23.6
Kurnool	—..34.0..21.7
Lucknow	—..17.2..12.0
Madurai	—..32.7..20.5
Mangaluru	—..33.4..22.6
Mumbai	—..31.1..15.6
Mysuru	—..30.4..12.2
New Delhi	—..20.6....5.6
Patna	—..20.1....9.3
Port Blair	—..30.5..23.7
Puducherry	—..32.0..20.6
Pune	—..32.5..15.1
Raipur	—..28.6..15.0
Ranchi	—..22.7..10.4
Shillong	—..13.7....5.0
Shimla	—....9.3....3.1
Srinagar	—....8.3....0.5
Thiruvananthapuram	—..32.0..21.7
Tiruchi	—..30.7..22.0
Vijayawada	—..30.6..20.4
Visakhapatnam	—..30.0..23.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.20	127	55	... 113	...110	
Bengaluru	.08	..92	47	... 143	...100	
Chennai	.26	..44	44	... 177	...116	
Delhi	.06	..29	41	... 318	...193	
Hyderabad	.04	..09	44	... 134	.....—	
Kolkata	.18	..04	35	... 317	...199	
Lucknow	.07	..23	83	... 351	...257	
Mumbai	.16	..38	47	... 258	...152	
Pune	..—	..—	.—	..... —	.....—	
Visakhapatnam	.12	..42	31	... 107	...111	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Siwan, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 488 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 29

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Yet another stampede at TDP event in A.P., 3 women killed

Incident happened when people rushed to receive gifts during programme; Chief Minister Jagan expressed shock over the incident and ordered swift medical treatment for those injured

Press Trust of India
AMARAVATI

Three women were killed and several others were injured on Sunday near here when people rushed to receive gifts leading to a stampede at a Telugu Desam Party programme following a public meeting, the government said.

The incident comes just three days after the death of eight people during a similar event in Nellore in southern Andhra Pradesh.

Health Minister V. Rajani said a woman died on the spot while two others died of injuries while being shifted to a hospital.

N. Chandrababu Naidu giving gifts to women in Chandranna Sankranthi Kanuka in Guntur on Sunday. T. VIJAYA KUMAR

A police official said that as soon as the organisers started distributing gifts, including saris, the crowd swelled and they pushed the barricades away leading to a stampede.

The gift distribution began after TDP chief N. Chandrababu Naidu left the venue after addressing the public meeting at Guntur, about 33 km from here.

Expressing shock over the incident, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that the government would stand by the families of the victims. In a statement, he ordered swift medical treatment to the injured.

Ms. Rajani alleged that the TDP campaigned for the past 10 days to woo people, assuring distribution of gifts. "Three lives have been sacrificed for Naidu's publicity mania," she said at the hospital where the injured are being treated in Guntur.

Forest watcher killed by tusker in Nagarahole

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

A forest watcher on night patrol was killed when a wild tusker charged at him in Metikuppe range of Nagarahole National Park.

The incident occurred a little past midnight when the watcher, Mahadevaswamy, 35, along with three others was engaged in driving an elephant herd from an agricultural field into the forest. Deputy Conservator of Forests C. Harshakumar said the incident took place on the forest periphery a little past midnight. There were around four elephants in the herd and one of them came charging at the watchers, and while Mahadevaswamy died of injuries another watcher Rajesh, was injured. He said forest watchers tend to be in small groups and patrol in the periphery at night using powerful torches when there are conflict issues. The elephant was being chased into the forest when Mahadevaswamy was attacked by it. His body was shifted to H.D. Kote hospital for autopsy and was later handed over to his family. The Forest Department has already paid compensation of ₹5 lakh. Anil Chikkamadhu, MLA, also visited the spot and consoled the bereaved family members.

This is the second death due to elephant attack in villages bordering Nagarahole during the past 48 hours. A woman farmer Chikkamma died in her field after she was attacked by a tusker at Chikka Beechanahalli in Hunsur taluk.

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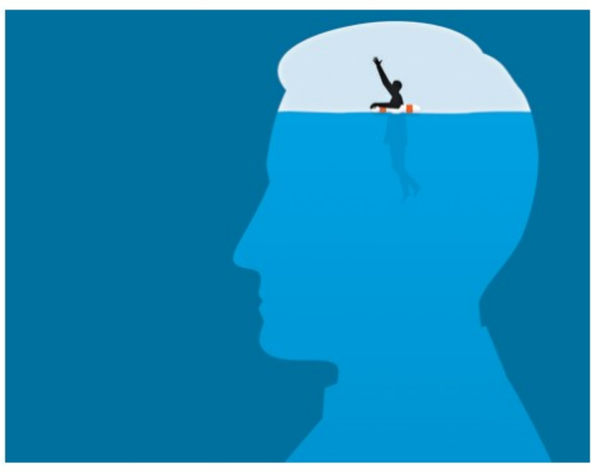
Bhuvana Shridhar

Lend them a helping hand

With mental health issues on the rise among the youth, educational institutions should create safe spaces to foster emotional wellbeing of students

The path of higher education is critical in every student's life, as it determines their future. Over the past two years, the pandemic-led lockdowns and the uncertainties associated with them have had a detrimental effect on mental well-being. Young adults, especially, have been exhibiting particularly high rates of insecurity, unruly behaviour, drug abuse, distress, depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies. The shift to remote learning programmes and temporary closures led to a drastic decline in attention spans and poor learning outcomes. Limited or lack of access to digital learning, absence of appropriate counselling and support, and the inability to connect with peers triggered loneliness and anxiety, further exacerbating the situation.

While there is limited empirical evidence to understand the full extent of the pandemic's impacts on mental health, several studies highlight the generally poor state of mental well-being for Indian youth and the broader stigma around it. According to UNICEF's survey findings for 21 countries in *The State of the World's Children 2021* report, every one in seven youngsters between 15 and 24 years in India reported some form of poor mental health such as feelings of depression or disinterest. and only 41% felt there was a need to reach out for support when people experienced mental health issues. This was the lowest across the 21 countries surveyed. The mental health



crisis in India is further compounded by a severe shortage of trained professionals. A study from the *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* estimates that India has 0.75 psychiatrists per 1,00,000 patients, which is much lower than the recommended three psychiatrists per 1,00,000.

Over the years, collegiate bodies, higher authorities and student counselling groups have taken a few measures to provide adequate support to students with mental health issues. While there is greater awareness of and talk about mental health, tangible measures should be put in place in educational institutions that reopened in 2022 after two years of closure to ensure the overall well-being of students.

What institutes can do

Here are some ways to strengthen mental healthcare services on education campuses across India:

Create youth-driven activities and promote volunteers and personal mentors who can be trained as frontline support to address issues around mental health within the campus.

Establish a tailored curriculum that supports and interests students, and a teaching methodology which motivates them.

Develop resilient educators who can handle students with varying needs and take a keen interest in connecting with their world.

Host mental health counselling camps, wellness weeks, as well as interactive sessions within the campus to teach students self-calming or anxiety-coping techniques.

Build a safe and interactive classroom environment that includes organising activities to help manage stress and promote well-being.

Have an open-door policy to help students feel comfortable in sharing their problems and seeking appropriate support.

Ensure that trained professionals are on hand to provide in-house medical assistance, counselling and telehealth offerings on confidential matters.

Encourage social time by promoting co-curricular activities to build self-esteem and social skills.

For the educators

Apart from institutional efforts, teachers and professors also need to take action on their part. For example, pay attention and be mindful of how they communicate with the students. The tone must be warm yet professional. Educators should take students' concerns seriously, offer validation and acceptance, and avoid shaming. They should motivate students by emphasising their positives, encouraging teamwork and collaboration, and giving constructive feedback.

Education in Higher Education Institutes (HEIS) is a journey of self-exploration, self-discovery and self-experimentation. Creating a safe and congenial learning environment will help foster better emotional and mental well-being of students, which in turn will lead to better academic results.

As we begin our journey in 2023, it is imperative that our educational institutions work towards providing early intervention through appropriate support and accessibility for all.

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Ayes and nays

Higher turnout is worth striving for, but not without sufficient safeguards

Given the regional variations in demographic trends and economic opportunities, India has a high rate of migration, which doubled in the census decade of 2001-2011. Migrants often see their political and economic rights compromised at their place of origin and residence. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has now proposed a mechanism to facilitate remote voting for domestic migrants. The Remote Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) prototype can be used for up to 72 constituencies simultaneously from a single, remote polling booth. The ECI has invited political parties for a demonstration of the prototype on January 16. A concept note by the Commission takes into account the legal, operational, administrative and technological challenges at hand. Voter participation is comparatively high in India; yet, in 2019, one in three voters did not turn up. Going by the 2017 Economic Survey, there are around 14 crore internal migrants in the country, and they have to cross many hurdles to be able to vote. Anything that advances their rights must be welcomed. But a hurried move will only do more damage to the integrity of the electoral process, which many fear is eroding, and for valid reasons. The ECI's recent conduct, including in the 2022 Gujarat Assembly elections, has been less than reassuring.

The ECI proposes to have remote voting for migrants as early as this year. While there is no technical basis for allegations of fraud in the current, single-constituency, non-networked EVMs, public trust in them has never been lower than it is today. Public trust is the only strength of any electoral process. With EVMs, the voter has no way to see whether the vote is recorded as it is cast. The ECI's ambitious plan comes against this backdrop of public scepticism about its own impartiality and, less justifiably, about the reliability of the EVMs. The proposed plan will add more questions to the mix, including some fundamental ones such as about the correlation between citizenship and territoriality. In an era of unprecedented human mobility, the idea of portable voting rights is worth considering, but it will have far-reaching ramifications that should be accounted for. Defining a migrant who is eligible to vote remotely is going to be controversial – for instance, when does a migrant at a place become a resident? Even the ECI had expressed doubts about the practicality of remote voting rights for migrants in the past. Meanwhile, there is also an active demand for voting rights for Non-Resident Indians. Higher turnout is worth striving for, but not without sufficient safeguards.

A broken formula

Some small savings schemes have been unreasonably left out of the rate hikes

Last Friday, the government increased the returns on some small savings schemes for the first quarter of 2023 by 20 basis points to 110 basis points, or 0.2 to 1.1 percentage points. These will kick in for eight of the 12 small savings schemes where small investors park their household surpluses through banks and post offices. A similar selective hike was effected for the previous quarter too, after a long 27-month pause in small savings rates, but the range was minimal at 10 to 30 basis points and only applied on five schemes. In the latest review, the highest rate hike of 1.1 percentage points has been granted only for one-, two- and three-year time deposits. For other schemes, the increase is more nominal – 40 basis points for senior citizens and monthly income schemes and just 20 basis points for the National Savings Certificate and Kisan Vikas Patra. Returns on the popular long-term savings avenue, the Public Provident Fund (PPF), have been left unchanged at 7.1%, prevailing since April 2020 when they were slashed from 7.9% at the onset of the pandemic. Neither is there relief for those investing in the Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January 2015 to encourage families to invest in the education of girl children and save for their marriage expenses, under the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign.

For the October to December quarter, the Reserve Bank of India had estimated that the returns on the PPF should have been 7.72% and the Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme at 8.22%. Having adopted a formula-based approach to resetting small savings rates every quarter since 2016, the government must not resort to selective implementation. There has been no perceptible easing of yields on government securities to which these returns are supposed to be linked, in the last quarter of 2022. Perhaps, the decision to offer the highest gains for shorter tenure deposits is driven by the government's debt management planning, but the status quo on PPF and other schemes is not fair to the risk-averse middle class. Investments in PPF, for instance, are in any case capped at ₹1.5 lakh a year and overall deposits are far lower than bank deposits, if boosting the latter to ensure healthy credit availability for industry was a concern. Inflation in general has been elevated since the 2020 rate cuts and was above the 6% tolerance threshold through most of 2022, accompanied by sharp interest rate hikes. Households have also grappled with income losses and higher health expenses through the past two and a half years, and deserve better.

India's dilemmas in an Asian century

Happymon Jacob

teaches at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and is the founder of the Council for Strategic and Defence Research

If 2022 was a momentous year for India and the rest of the world, 2023 is likely to further sharpen the geopolitical fault lines set in motion by the previous year. Amidst all the tectonic shifts around us, what appears to be a certainty is the emergence of an Asia-centric century. But is that really good news for India?

The geopolitical and economic rise of Asia coincides with several regional and global developments which have the potential to undermine the stability and prosperity India had hoped an Asian century would bring. The withdrawal of the U.S. from much of continental Asia and the aggressive rise of China and the Ukraine war appear to have ended the great power concert in Asia, or what appeared as one for some time. Today, two major powers – Russia and China – are trying, though in varying degrees, to undermine the global balance of power, with several regional powers such as Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia in tow. Asia may be headed towards more global prominence, but instability will be its possessive partner.

For India, the rise of the Asian century might turn out to be too steeped in harsh realpolitik for its comfort. A deeply status quoist, risk-averse New Delhi is inherently opposed to playing high-risk games of chicken that cross its own self-defined red lines. New Delhi might speak like a revisionist power, but don't go by what it says; go by what it does. Is it, therefore, prepared to deal with the harsh headwinds of the geopolitical contestations of an Asian century?

Asian century and (multi)polarity

There can be no meaningful Asian century in a unipolar world. One alternative to a unipolar world is a multipolar world with Russia, China, Japan, India and other, smaller powers asserting themselves on the global stage. The other alternative is a China-dominated Asia. Herein lies the challenge for India. It is clear that a China-dominated Asia won't serve India's geopolitical interests. Would a multipolar Asia be useful to Indian interests? Not necessarily either. A multipolar world/Asia with new and shifting alliances; formal, informal, secret, open and in-between pacts; and competing coalitions vying for dominance will invariably take away from the relative 'stability' of the current world order where the power of the U.S. is on the decline and that of China is (still) on the rise.

For status quoist India, the rise of the Asian century might turn out to be too steeped in harsh realpolitik for its comfort

AP

More so, while multipolarity is desirable in theory, what kind of multipolarity are we seeing the emergence of? For India, multipolarity is one premised on the rule of law or peaceful coexistence. In the words of former Indian foreign secretary H.V. Shringla in 2021, "India values a multipolar international order, underpinned by international law, premised upon respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, resolution of international disputes through peaceful negotiations, and free and open access for all to the global commons". If anything, a multipolar world led by Asian powers for the most part is likely to be the opposite of what Mr. Shringla outlined.

One of the likely implications of a multipolar world in which Asia takes the centre stage would be a sharpening of opposition against the current global financial order. The so-called weaponisation of globalisation and trade, sanctions against Russia, and Russia's attempts in turn at evading them with help from its Asian partners (China, Iran, Turkey, India, etc.) will pose serious challenges to dollar-based trade and Western payment systems such as SWIFT. The aftermath of the Ukraine war has led to a serious search in parts of Asia for alternative trading arrangements and payment mechanisms. India may have issues with dollar-based trade, but would it like trading arrangements centred around Yuan?

Delhi's dilemmas

New Delhi has consistently campaigned for a multipolar world where key Asian powers have a place at the high table of international politics. Yet it may hesitate to engage the emergent Asian century for various reasons. For one, the Indian establishment has a deeply status quoist view of the world order despite its frequent calls for change. While it believes in a more democratic, orderly and rules-based world order, it recognises that major systemic changes could also be accompanied by chaos. New Delhi, therefore, likes slow, peaceful and consensual transformation of the system which, of course, is not what is happening today.

Second, New Delhi's biggest fear would be an Asian century without stable multipolarity. Even if it emerges, a multipolar world is most likely going to be a passing phenomenon, to be soon replaced by a bipolar world dominated by the U.S. and China with the others bandwagoning, balancing and hedging. For India, a bipolar international system dominated by China and the U.S. is a bad deal. If such a world leads to bipolar rivalry, India, being a next-door adversary of China, could often be the target of Chinese ire.

Third, if a bipolar world leads to great power accommodation between the U.S. and China, India's situation could be worse off. If the U.S. accommodates China as a peer, it could mean the U.S. accepting China's sphere of influence. This could make India a casualty at the altar of great power politics. Put differently, whether the U.S. and China compete or accommodate each other in a bipolar world, India has reasons to worry.

But how real is the emergence of a China-U.S. G2? Look at it this way: the more the Ukraine war goes on, the more the U.S./West could attempt to choreograph a working relationship with China (we are already witnessing the early signs of it with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz reaching out to China). That China has not gone all out in support of Russia's war efforts could encourage the West/U.S. to do precisely that. For China, an American offer of accommodation in a G2 format outweighs the utility of a closer strategic partnership with an embattled Russia.

Post-Indian South Asia

Finally, there is little doubt that an Asian century will be a China-dominated one. China's growing material power - both economic and military - is already paving the way for it, especially with the U.S.'s focus firmly entrenched in the Russia-Ukraine theatre. As far as our neighbourhood is concerned, we may be looking at a 'post-Indian South Asia' in the not-so-distant future, tucked away in the Chinese sphere of influence, though not entirely inimical to Indian interests. Perhaps this is an exaggeration, but I am evocatively emphasising a point that some of us may be conveniently ignoring. Imagine a South Asia which, in varying degrees, trades with China using Yuan, is deeply entrenched in the Belt and Road Initiative projects and its associated debt traps, is militarily closer to China, toes Beijing's line on international issues, and maintains just a minimum relationship with India? That looks like a post-Indian South Asia.

Navigating the emergent Asian century is not going to be easy for New Delhi, but being cognisant of its many vagaries is perhaps a good start.

Bolsonaro's legacy will take time to undo

Vijay Prashad

is Director of Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, which has an office in São Paulo, Brazil. His most recent book (with Noam Chomsky) is 'The Withdrawal: Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan and the Fragility of U.S. Power'

On January 1, 2023, after his inauguration, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (known as Lula) walked into Palácio do Planalto, the official presidential office in Brasília, and got to work. Two days before Lula's inauguration, former President Jair Bolsonaro got onto a flight and left Brasilia for Florida in the U.S. It is not clear when he will return. Mr. Bolsonaro will certainly be away for the inauguration and, as has been widely expected, will stay away from Brazil for some time since he fears criminal investigation. He leaves Brazil in tatters with his mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with his policies that enriched the wealthy and increased hunger amongst the poor. It is into this ruin that Lula has now entered.

A difficult road ahead

People, therefore, cannot afford to have high expectations of Lula's third term in office (he was the president of Brazil from 2003 to 2010). Lula will face a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate that are in the grip of the right wing. This is not a new phenomenon, although the Centrão (centre), the opportunistic bloc in parliament that has run things, will now have to work alongside far-right members of Mr. Bolsonaro's movement. With its leader in the U.S. and not expected to return soon, the Bolsonarista movement has no desire to open a dialogue about the future of Brazil. Its members have a harsh attitude, shaped by fake news and a suffocating attitude to money and religion. Brazil's Vice President, Geraldo Alckmin, has been deputed to work with a difficult legislature to pass Lula's necessary agenda, including new policies to end hunger, which had been a landmark achievement of Lula's previous presidency through the Fome Zero or Zero Hunger policy.

Lula faces serious crises within Brazil, which is divided along economic, political and social lines

Lula's appointments

During the heart of the pandemic, a study showed that half of Brazil's 213.6 million residents were struggling to find enough food to eat. Part of the answer to this problem will be the passage of an agrarian reform bill, which is long overdue. Lula will tackle the problem of hunger with an understanding that it reveals the many fissures in Brazilian society around class, gender, and race. He has made it clear that he understands that the hunger epidemic is not merely about lack of income, as hunger demonstrates the reassertion of wretched old inequalities and the mistreatment of people of African descent and of indigenous communities. That is why Lula has created a new Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, which will be led by the charismatic Sônia Guajajara. He has brought in Anielle Franco, the sister of the assassinated politician Marielle Franco, as the Minister of Racial Equality. With Marína Silva as the Minister of Environment and with the singer Margareth Menezes as the Minister of Culture, Lula has made it clear that neither will he enable the kind of social toxicity that Mr. Bolsonaro championed (namely, the racism and sexism that saturated his government) nor will he allow the social basis of equality between humans, and between humans and nature, to be damaged. Just the appointment of these powerful women suggests a new way forward for Brazil.

The space for manoeuvre within Brazil will become narrow, which is why Lula has promised to exert himself in the region and in the world. His Foreign Minister, Mauro Vieira, is a veteran diplomat who held the same post for two years during the presidency of Dilma Rousseff, a close confidant and ally of Lula. Mr. Vieira is close to Lula's former Foreign Minister and adviser, Celso Amorim. A few days before the first round of elections in October, Lula spoke at an event where he reminisced about his time on the world stage. He spoke about his role in bringing down the tensions against Iran. There is no doubt that he was telling this story to suggest that he will play such a role in Ukraine. Lula will travel soon to China and the U.S. in an attempt to reduce the tensions between these two major countries. The choice of Lula's Finance Minister, Fernando Haddad, is significant because Mr. Haddad has made it clear that Brazil needs to lead a policy of South American integration, with the possibility that Brazil will create a new continent-wide digital currency (the sur) that will anchor this integration. Major countries in the Global South have begun to assert themselves – for example, by wishing to mimic the U.S. position on the Ukraine war. But there has been no credible leader from the Global South who has been able to put this new mood into the global discussion. Lula will likely be just this leader.

Lula faces serious crises within Brazil, a society divided along economic, political, and social lines. This divisiveness was exaggerated by Mr. Bolsonaro, who leaves a legacy that will take time to undo. It would be too much to expect Lula to rush through his agenda given this political and social landscape.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opposition unity

Rahul Gandhi's statement is not new ("If Opposition comes up with a vision, BJP cannot win: Rahul," January 1, 2023). Every Opposition leader stresses the importance of unity among the Opposition parties to defeat the BJP, but these parties are never able to forge this unity. Even the Congress's invitation to the Samajwadi Party, the Rashtriya Lok Dal, and Bahujan Samaj Party to join its Bharat Jodo Yatra when the yatra passes through Uttar Pradesh was declined by those parties. Such disunity will enable the BJP to continue in power.

D. Sethuraman
Chennai

A party which was dilly-dallying on electing its own president does not inspire confidence among other Opposition parties or the public. The Congress's internal democracy faced a severe credibility crisis with many leaders deserting the party when their efforts to revitalise it were ignored by the leadership. The party also failed to elect a young president, which would have attracted young voters to its fold. Many regional leaders are aspiring for the prime ministerial post. The Congress needs to do more to strengthen its cadre.

V. Subramanian
Chennai

Disappointing reaction

It is disappointing to see the government's reaction to the deaths flagged by Uzbekistan from toxic cough syrup ("Precipice of shame," Editorial, December 31, 2022). India should have apologised. And if it is not guilty, it should put up detailed results of its investigation for the world to see. A satisfactory response instead of a blame game could save the pharma industry from this disgrace.

Vidhi Jain
Jaipur

NJAC debate

The collegium system is not mandated by the Constitution, whereas Parliament was empowered by the Constitution to make new laws ("As the NJAC debate is revived by the government in 2022, political fault lines have deepened," Jan. 1, 2023). It is incomprehensible how the collegium is what we have while the NJAC was deemed unconstitutional.

Duggaraju Srinivasa Rao,
Vijayawada

Corrections & Clarifications

>>In the story, "Nomination of Garcetti as Ambassador to India hits a dead end for Biden Administration" (Jan. 1, 2023), the reference in the opening paragraph to confirmation *by the House and the Senate* should be corrected to say *by the Senate*. Also, the reference in the second paragraph to the *House of Representatives* should be amended to *Senate Foreign Relations Committee*.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

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Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

India-China: between pre-1962 and now

Sujan Chinoy

is Director General of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. Views expressed are personal

The clash between Indian troops and the Chinese PLA at Galwan in 2020 and the recent altercation between troops at Yangtse in Arunachal Pradesh have served to highlight the lingering boundary dispute as well as the complex Line of Actual Control (LAC).

It is tempting to examine the parallels in India-China relations in the 1960s and the current situation along the LAC. Both situations concern the boundary question, although the focus in the 1950s was on the fundamental question of the "territorial dispute" involving the whole of Aksai Chin claimed by India and the whole of NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) claimed by China. Today, however, with the Chinese firmly in occupation of Aksai Chin and India firm in guarding its territorial integrity in Arunachal Pradesh, the immediate issue has moved on to transgressions along the LAC.

The differences in the western sector (Ladakh) are no longer confined to Trig Heights in the Daulet Beg Oldie (DBO) area and Demchok in the south as was the case in earlier decades. The Depsang Bulge, Galwan, Pangong Lake and Hot Springs are areas where China is seeking to press expedient claims. Since the Galwan incident, the two sides have disengaged at multiple friction points even as military and diplomatic talks continue to find a way out of the impasse at Depsang and Demchok.

In the middle (central sector), the Barahoti pasture north of Chamoli in Uttarakhand has been at the centre of the dispute for the past seven decades.

In the eastern sector (Arunachal Pradesh), the international boundary and the LAC are defined by the 1914 McMahon Line, based on the watershed principle. Yet, China seeks to make inroads in the Tawang sector as well as other areas such as the Upper Subansiri region, and further, near the tri-junction with Myanmar.

Traditionally, China has enjoyed advantage in terms of terrain and logistics in Tibet. China has always projected a spurious interpretation of the LAC and shied away from clarifying its position through an exchange of large-scale maps following the one-off exchange of maps two decades ago concerning the middle sector.

Unlike in the past, India is rapidly building its border infrastructure. China has had a headstart in building its own, yet has the temerity to object to improved logistics on the Indian side, solely to keep intact the asymmetry. There are other similarities and differences compared to the past. Both periods involve contention over frontier tracts which underwent redefinition as the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China came into their own in quick succession in the late 1940s and sought to interpret their geographies through clear-cut boundary lines. The difference today is that the focus is primarily on the LAC as against the larger boundary dispute even though neither side has given up its extensive territorial claims.

In the 1950s, China had yet to reveal its true bias in favour of Pakistan, including on Kashmir. As ties deteriorated, China's support for Pakistan on Kashmir became self-apparent in the 1960s. Today, China openly works in tandem with Pakistan against India's interests to internationalise the issue at the UN.

China's internal vulnerabilities have always cast a shadow on bilateral relations with India. Whether under Mao Zedong or Xi Jinping, Tibet has remained a source of insecurity for China. In the late 1950s, Mao Zedong adopted an aggressive stance towards India as a means of consolidating his leadership in the face of internal challenges and avoiding censure of disastrous political and economic policies. Today, Mr. Xi is facing mounting scrutiny for the dreadful Zero-COVID policy, and growing authoritarianism. The tendency to create external diversions is a common thread.

There are important lessons to be imbibed from the past. In 1962, India was forced to approach the U.S. and other Western countries for military assistance to meet the Chinese challenge. But it was meagre and came too late. In the current phase, India has rapidly inducted new weapon systems albeit with heavy emphasis on *aatmanirbharta* (self-reliance) in defence manufacturing.

The LAC between India and China, not being the result of bilateral negotiations, is frequently open to challenge by either side. There are areas along the LAC that have been patrolled by both sides in the past. The Chinese ingress in Sumdorong Chu valley in the Tawang sector in 1986-87 resulted in close confrontation that lasted eight years. It was only in 1995 that the two sides pulled back, with India relocating its Jaya and Negi posts on the south side of the Hathungla-Lungrola ridgeline. Nobody insinuated then that India was creating a buffer zone on its own territory, so why take that line now in regard to the disengagement already achieved in Ladakh? China encroached on Longju in Upper Subansiri way back in August 1959, yet the government of the day did nothing about it thereafter.

The biggest difference between the situation in the 1960s and now is the political will of the Modi government and the determination of the Indian army to block Chinese patrols, and not just in Yangtse.

Overall, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's endeavour to engage China has been in keeping with India's broader world vision of good-neighbourly and peaceful ties, and inclusive growth. China's vision is contrarian. It seeks to build a China-centric hierarchy with scant regard for notions of equality and multipolarity.

The biggest difference today is the political will of the Modi government and the Indian army to block Chinese patrols

The north-south divide in West Bengal

There is growing politics around the demand of a separate State

STATE OF PLAY

Shiv Sahay Singh
shivsahay.s@thehindu.co.in

In the second week of December 2022, Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) president Bimal Gurung organised a national seminar in New Delhi on the issue of Gorkhaland, which seeks a separate State to be carved out of territories of Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of West Bengal.

The convention was a fresh attempt by the GJM leadership on creating a platform to reignite the statehood stir in Darjeeling hills. Representatives of different political parties including Hamro Party chief Ajoy Edwards and Binay Tamang (who was in Trinamool Congress at that point) joined the seminar, giving more credence to the event.

A few days after the convention, on December 28, when the Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM) and the Trinamool Congress wrested control of Darjeeling Municipality from Hamro Party, Binay Tamang quit the Trinamool Congress accusing West Bengal's ruling party of bulldozing democracy in the hills.

With these two developments, the new realignment of Darjeeling politics looks clear. Bimal Gurung, Binay Tamang and Ajoy Edwards have come together to take on the Anit Thapa-led BGPM and the Trinamool Congress in Darjeeling. Last June, elections to the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) were held after a period of 10 years and the BGPM won the regional autonomous body.

Political realignment and allies turning political adversaries are not new to the politics of the hills, a region which, since the 1980s, has witnessed several movements for creation of a separate State.

While political considerations may be the reason why the parties in the hills choose these alignments, one cannot look away from the regional disparities in the State that triggers the demand of a separate State. For decades, development in West Bengal has been Kolkata-centric and remote districts in the State have waited for their turn.

The political discourse in the State has often centred on the divide of north and south Bengal. Development issues are not the only reasons behind the recurrent demands for separate States. There are divides of ethnicity and language that form the basis of such demands. There is a clamour for demand of 'Greater Cooch Behar' State in Cooch Behar also.

The Trinamool Congress government has over the past 11 years tried to address these issues. The government set up a new State Secretariat in north Bengal, announced the formation of several boards for different communities in the hills. But these initiatives have failed to bring any lasting solution. The experiments of granting limited autonomy in the form of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (1988-2012) and GTA (2012-till date) have not been fully able to address the grievances of the people of Darjeeling hills.

Different political parties have different stands on the demands of autonomy and creating a separate State out of the territories of West Bengal. The ruling Trinamool Congress is opposed to any division of the State and the party leader and chairperson Mamata Banerjee has clearly made this point on several occasions. The State leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) claimed that they are not in favour of any division; however, the local leaders occasionally make statements about the discontent among the people in hills triggering the debate about the north-south divide.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP won all the seats in north Bengal including Darjeeling. Any support for the demand of a separate State may help the BJP reap some electoral dividends in north, but will result in serious setbacks in south Bengal.

While the politics around the north-south divide in West Bengal may appear to be murky, but outside the ambit of politics, there is a trust deficit between the north and the south. Ms. Banerjee has been frequently visiting districts of north Bengal, holding government and party events. However, this may be the time for her government to look at something other than a Kolkata-centric model of development and try something different to assuage the leadership of the north. Mere assurances of development and setting up a development board will not be enough in the long run. The regional disparities of north Bengal need to be addressed at the earliest.

Bad loans share at a decadal low in Indian banks

While fresh accretion of bad loans declined, writing off loans from the bank's books also helped

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan

In September 2022, the gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio of all Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) was at a seven-year low, the latest data from the Reserve Bank of India showed. GNPA ratio is the proportion of gross non-performing assets in gross loans and advances. The GNPAs are bad loans which the borrower is not in a position to repay at the moment. A loan turns bad or becomes an NPA if they are overdue for over 90 days.

In September, the net non-performing assets (NNPA) ratio was at a ten-year low. NNPA ratio is the proportion of net non-performing assets in net loans and advances. Banks have to set aside (or provision) a part of their profit as a buffer for potential losses that may arise from the NPAs. Thus, NPAs reduce a bank's available capital to lend fresh loans. The NNPA deducts these provisions from GNPA and so is a better indicator of the bad loans in a bank's books. **Chart 1** shows the NNPA ratio of all SCBs.

These two data points show that the issue of non-performing assets, which was a major headache for banks after the RBI carried out an expansive asset quality review in 2015, is not that troubling anymore.

One important factor that led to the reduction of the NPAs is the drop in slippage ratio of SCBs. The slippage ratio indicates fresh accretion of NPAs in a year and is plotted in **chart 2**. Slippage ratio is arrived at by dividing fresh NPAs by standard advances at the beginning of the period. The slippage ratio is around 2% in September 2022 for SCBs, which is the lowest since at least 2015.

While fresh accretion of NPAs reduced, another way to reduce bad loans is to write them off from the bank's books. Banks voluntarily choose to write off NPAs to maintain healthy balance sheets. In the first half of FY23, the loan write-offs as a ratio of GNPAs slightly increased to 22.6% after declining for two consecutive years. So, a combination of both declining slippage and increasing write-offs brought the bad loans to its lowest point in many years.

As noted before, banks have to "provision" a part of their profit depending on the value and years an NPA exists. Additionally, due to the moratorium during the pandemic, banks had to also set aside some profits as a contingency measure. Both factors affected their net profits. However, with reducing NPAs, provisions declined, with moratorium lifted, contingencies were relaxed. These two meant that net profit of both public and private banks soared as shown in **chart 3**.

Due to the above factors, the profitability of the banks improved. Bank profitability is gauged by measuring a bank's Return on Assets (RoA = net profit by average total assets). An RoA of >=1% is generally considered good. As shown in **chart 4**, RoA of all scheduled commercial banks had dipped to negative territory in September 2019. By September 2022, it was back to 0.8%, levels last seen in 2014-15.

Another factor that led to all the changes mentioned above is the drastic shift in the sectors which the banks funded. In 2016, 40% of all outstanding credit went to industries, whereas just 20% was given out as retail loans. However, by 2022, retail loans' share surpassed industry credit, as shown in **chart 5**.

This was due to the very high share of bad loans in the industry sector till 2018, as shown in **chart 6**. The NPA in the industry sector has been brought down since, by a combination of recovery mechanisms such as insolvency and bankruptcy code and also by issuing fewer fresh loans to the industries. On the other hand, bad loans are barely there in the retail sector.

Banking on good loans

The charts are sourced from RBI's Financial Stability Reports released in December every year and the reports on Trend and Progress of Banking in India

Chart 1 | The chart shows the net non-performing assets ratio of all scheduled commercial banks in September each year

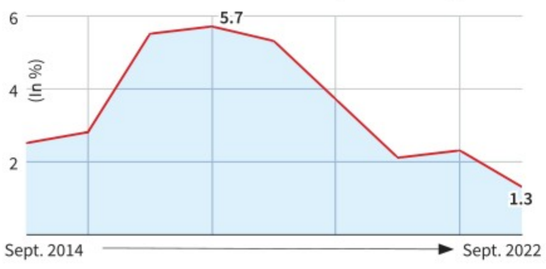


Chart 2 | The chart shows slippage ratio which indicates fresh accretion of NPAs in a period

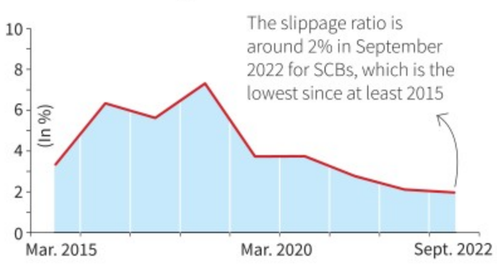


Chart 3 | The chart shows absolute values of provisions and contigencies, operating and net profit of SCBs in lakh crore

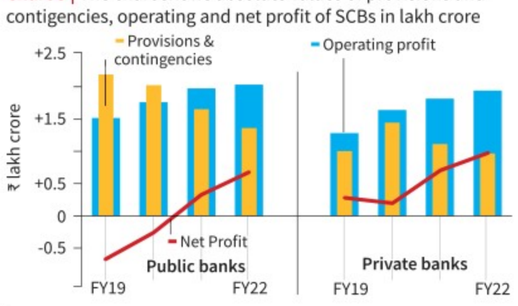


Chart 4 | The chart shows the Return on Assets of all scheduled commercial banks

Chart 5 | The chart shows the sector-wise % share of all outstanding credit of SCBs

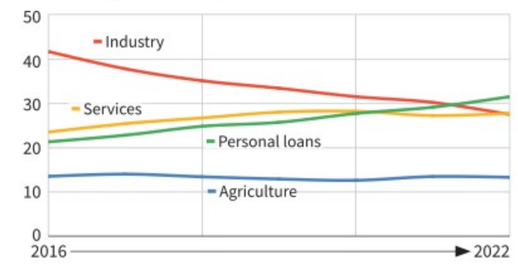
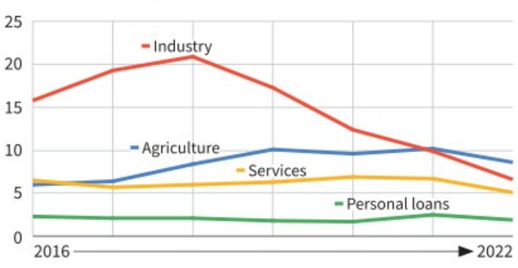


Chart 6 | The chart shows the sector-wise GNPA ratio at the end of March each year



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 2, 1973

Hanoi wants quick accord to end war

Saigon, Jan. 1: North Vietnam said to-night it had agreed to resume peace talks with the United States. The announcement ever Radio Hanoi was the first comment from North Vietnam since President Nixon, two days ago, called a halt to the bombing of the Hanoi-Haiphong area and said his envoy, Dr. Henry Kissinger, would resume negotiations in Paris on January 8. Radio Hanoi said: "On the occasion of the bombing halt, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam agrees to resume talks between Special Adviser Le Due Tho and Minister Xuan Thuy with Dr. Kissinger and meetings between experts of the two sides." The broadcast said North Vietnam had always approached the negotiations with a good will and a serious attitude. Radio Hanoi said the U.S. should approach the negotiations with similar good intent so that an agreement on ending the war could be signed rapidly and peace could be restored in Vietnam. North Vietnam yesterday reaffirmed its insistence for an immediate signing of the draft leave accord reached by the Presidential Adviser, Dr. Kissinger, and Hanoi's chief negotiator, Mr. Le Due Tho, in October. In a statement following a 30-minute meeting with the French Foreign Minister Mr. Maurice, the Hanoi Delegate-General to France, Mr. Vo Van Sung, said: "For us, the position is clear. There was an accord reached on October 20."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 2, 1923

Public health

Coimbatore: Outbreak of plague in this town at present seems to be under no man's control. In July, the first case was recorded and on August 31, 31 persons fell victims out of 53 persons who contracted this epidemic. September tolls were three times more than that of August, as many as 91 deaths were recorded from amongst 131 persons attacked. 137 persons died out of 161 patients suffering from plague during the month of October. The theory that the virulence of this epidemic increases in the cold season is amply proved by the fact that in November, there were 266 fresh attacks out of which 125 succumbed. In the current month, 117 persons died of plague out of 276 persons suffering from this dire disease. Total deaths from plague since the commencement is 949 attacks and 670 deaths. Total number of persons protected is 1,978.

From Page One

Dec. GST revenues up from November lows

"The government has settled ₹36,669 crore to the CGST and ₹31,094 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement. The total revenue of Centre and the States after regular settlements in the month of December 2022 is ₹63,380 crore for CGST and ₹64,451 crore for the SGST," the Ministry said.

On a sequential basis, while there was a 2.5% rise in revenues from November to December 2022, the number of e-way bills generated went up 3.95% to 7.9 crore in December.

While revenues from domestic transactions rose 18% overall, a dozen States recorded higher growth in tax collections and 13 States reported slower growth rates.

Goa, Odisha and Manipur reported a contraction in revenues of 22%, 6% and 5%, respectively, even as Chhattisgarh's revenues were flat year-on-year.

Bihar top gainer

Bihar reported the highest growth in revenues at 36%, followed by Nagaland (30%), the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir (28%), and Arunachal Pradesh (27%), with Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh seeing GST inflows rise by 26% each. Tamil Nadu's revenues rose 25%, followed closely by Rajasthan and West Bengal (24%), Madhya Pradesh (22%) and Maharashtra (20%).

Among the Union Territories, Ladakh reported a sharp 68% spike in revenues, followed by Dadra Nagar Haveli (37%), Chandigarh (33%) and Puducherry (30%). However, Daman and Diu reported a whopping 86% drop in GST collections, with Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands recording contractions of 36% and 19%, respectively.

Abhishek Jain, partner, indirect tax, KPMG, said the robust GST collections suggest that ₹1.5 lakh crore may be "the new normal" for monthly revenues, as the December's numbers came in after peak festive sales are over.

Haryana Minister quits over allegations

He expects the Chief Minister to take the next decision on the matter after the investigation in the case was completed.

Mr. Singh claimed that an atmosphere was being created to spoil his image and sought an impartial investigation into the "false allegations" by the junior coach of the Sports Department.

Case registered

The public relations officer of the Chandigarh Police said a case was registered against the Minister at the Sector 26 police station on charges of outraging the modesty of a woman, unwelcome physical contact, assault with intention to disrobe, wrongful confinement and criminal intimidation. He said the matter was under investigation.

A three-member committee headed by Additional Director-General of Police Mamta Singh, at present Inspector-General Rohtak Range, has been constituted by the Haryana government for the investigation.

The complainant met Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij seeking justice in the matter, and said that she expected more victims to come forward after the Minister was sent to jail.

She had held a press conference in Chandigarh this past Thursday, accusing Mr. Singh of molesting her at his residence in September. The woman alleged that the Minister inappropriately touched her and asked her to keep him happy.

The Minister denied the allegations as "baseless" and "absolutely false".

Protests held

Following the allegations, several women and social organisations in Haryana had held demonstrations in Rohtak on Saturday burning the Minister in effigy and seeking his removal.

Former Haryana Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda has demanded an impartial investigation.

India and Austria to sign migration and mobility agreement, shore up ties

Accord will help combat the rise in illegal migration from India, says Austrian Foreign Ministry; Jaishankar and Schallenberg also to discuss India's G-20 Presidency and situation in Ukraine

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Close watch: The pact will regulate multiple entry visas for professionals and student exchange programmes.

Close on the heels of similar mobility agreements with France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Finland, India will sign a "Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement" (MMPA) with Austria on Monday during External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Vienna.

While India has been keen to finalise these agreements with European countries as a stepping stone to resolving issues over the long-pending India-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement and facilitating Indian professionals working in these countries, the European countries also see them as a way to curb illegal immigration from India.

"This is a much-needed agreement, especially in view of the sharp increase in illegal migration Austria was confronted with last year, including over 15,000 illegal migrants from India with practically no chance of asylum," explained Claudia Türtscher, spokesperson to Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg, when asked about the MMPA. "The agreement is now a useful tool to combat illegal migration together, as it enables the swift return of illegal migrants."

In addition, the agreement will regulate multiple entry visas for professionals and student exchange programmes, and will be reviewed regularly by a Joint Working Group.

Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Schallenberg on Sunday held a combined meeting with Foreign Ministers of Czech and Slovakia, under the "Slavkov" trilateral format for the Central European countries.

Points of discussion

On the agenda for bilateral and multilateral talks, Mr. Schallenberg's spokesperson spoke of India's Presidency of the G-20, as well as "the position of India on the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and its global negative ramifications". During a visit to Delhi in March, Mr. Schallenberg, had told *The Hindu* that the war in Europe would have repercussions for the whole world, and no country could "stay at its sidelines".

This is the first trip to Austria by an Indian Foreign Minister in 27 years, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement last week. Mr. Jaishankar also met with the Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer on Sunday, and will meet the Director-General of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi on Monday.

Mr. Grossi had earlier interacted with Mr. Jaishankar in 2016, when he was the head of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and worked on proposals for India's membership application, which is still pending. More recently he has been at the forefront on monitoring the Russian occupation of Ukrainian Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) at Zaporizhzhia where India was amongst countries that expressed concerns over nuclear safety risks. Also of interest for India is the IAEA's assessment of Iran's nuclear programme and efforts to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Monday's meeting between Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Schallenberg will be their fifth formal meeting.

Re-issue passport to PDP chief's mother, says J&K High Court

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Mehbooba Mufti

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has directed the passport office "to consider re-issuance of passport afresh" to former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's mother, and slammed the passport officer who rejected her passport renewal application for acting "as the mouthpiece of the CID".

"Simply on the basis of the report of the J&K CID [Criminal Investigation Department], which did not recommend to issue passport, the Passport Officer under the provisions of Passport Act has not to shut his eyes and to act on that. At least the Passport Officer should have, in the background of the facts and circumstances, if required, asked the police and CID whether there is anything adverse against the petitioner," the court said in an order issued on Saturday.

Justice M.A. Chowdhary held that in such a situation, without going into the PVR (Police Verification Report), refusal on part of the passport officer could simply be termed "non-application of mind".

"Passport Officer has not to act as the mouthpiece of the CID (nodal agency). When an authority is vested with the power, same is to be exercised judiciously and not arbitrarily as has been done in the instant case," Justice Chowdhary said.

The court directed the passport officer to "consider the entire matter afresh and pass orders thereon within a period of six weeks".

The court further held that the grounds on which the request of the petitioner for re-issue of the passport has been rejected is totally "untenable and unsustainable in the eyes of law".

"The petitioner, who claims to be an octogenarian, in absence of any adverse security report, cannot be deprived of her fundamental right guaranteed to her under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, to travel abroad as an Indian citizen," the court observed.

Gulshan Nazir, mother of Ms. Mufti, was denied a passport in 2021, following an adverse police report.

5 killed as fire breaks out in two factories in Maharashtra

The Hindu Bureau
PUNE

At least five people were killed and more than 20 injured on Sunday in two separate fire accidents in Nashik and Solapur districts of Maharashtra.

Two people were killed and 17 injured in a massive fire that broke out at the factory Jindal Polyfilm Ltd. in Igatpuri taluk of Nashik around noon. In the second incident, at least three persons were killed and three injured as a fire broke out following a blast at a firecracker factory at Barshi in Solapur district.

Ex gratia announced

Announcing a high-level probe into the Igatpuri incident, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said the government would give ex gratia of ₹5 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased and bear the treatment expenses of the injured. "It was a major accident. The fire is under control. I have myself spoken with the injured. Two are believed to be in critical condition. Our priority was to bring the fire under control and conduct rescue and relief operations. The government will conduct a high-level inquiry into the incident," Mr. Shinde said.

Earlier, the Chief Minister, after speaking with the authorities at the Devlali Air Force Station, activated a helicopter rescue operation when the inferno was raging. Sources said the fire is expected to be completely doused only by Monday.

In Solapur, the firecracker factory explosion occurred in Shirala around 3 p.m. Senior police officials and fire authorities rushed to the spot. The local administration said the death toll may rise.

Unemployment rate rises to 8.3% in Dec., highest in 16 months, says report

Reuters
NEW DELHI

Upward curve: The urban unemployment rate rose to 10.09% in December from 8.96% in the previous month. REUTERS

India's unemployment rate rose to 8.3% in December, the highest in 16 months, from 8% in the previous month, data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) showed on Sunday.

The urban unemployment rate rose to 10.09% in December from 8.96% in the previous month, while the rural unemployment rate slipped to 7.44% from 7.55%, the data showed.

Mahesh Vyas, managing director of the CMIE, said the rise in the unemployment rate was "not as bad as it may seem," as it came on top of a healthy increase in the labour participation rate, which shot up to 40.48% in December, the highest in 12 months.

"Most importantly, the employment rate has increased in December to 37.1%, which again is the highest since January 2022," he told *Reuters*.

The unemployment rate had declined to 7.2% in the July-September quarter compared to 7.6% in the previous quarter, according to separate quarterly data compiled by state-run National Statistical Office .

In December, the unemployment rate rose to 37.4% in Haryana, followed by 28.5% in Rajasthan and 20.8% in Delhi, the CMIE data showed.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said that India needs to move from a single focus on GDP growth to growth with employment, skilling of youth and creating production capacities with export prospects.

Coast Guard saves crew from sinking in Arabian Sea

Press Trust of India
AHMEDABAD

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on Sunday, claimed to have rescued 12 crew members of a sinking supply vessel in the Arabian sea off the Gujarat coast.

The operation was carried out on Saturday after a distress message was received by the Mumbai-based ICG Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) at around 11 a.m., a Defence release said.

The crew from the Motorised Supply Vessel (MSV) 'Nigahen Karam', which was on her passage to Djibouti, was taken onboard the Motor Tanker (MT) Searanger.

Upon receiving the call, the MRCC alerted the vessels operating in the vicinity and coordinated with the Maritime Rescue Sub Centre (MRSC), Porbandar.

Woman run over, body dragged for 4 km by car in Delhi; five apprehended

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A 20-year-old woman was killed after her scooter was hit by a car and her body was dragged around for about four kilometres in outer Delhi's Sultanpuri on Sunday, the police said.

Five men travelling in the car have been apprehended, they added. The Delhi Commission for Women has issued a notice to the police in the matter.

The police said they received information at 3.24 a.m. in the Kanjhawala police station (Rohini district) that a body was tied to a car which was going in the direction of the Qutubgarh area. The body was sent to Sanjay Gandhi Memorial hospital, Mangolpuri for post-mortem, they said.

The police received information that a body was tied to a car which was going towards Qutubgarh

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Harendra Kumar Singh said the victim's leg got entangled in one of the wheels of the car and she was dragged for around four kilometres.

"A case under IPC Sections 279 (rash driving) and 304-A (causing death by negligence) has been registered against Deepak Khanna, 26, Amit Khanna, 25, Krishan, 27, Mithun, 26, and Manoj Mittal," he said.

The police said blood sample of the driver had been preserved to examine whether he was under the influence of alcohol or not.

The police also debunked theories of the incident being a rape case. "False and frivolous media reports of the incident being a rape-murder case are being circulated," a police officer said.

Several injured in attacks on Christians in Chhattisgarh

The Hindu Bureau
BHOPAL

Several persons, including a police officer, were injured in an alleged attack on Christian families in Gorra village of Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur on Sunday. The latest incident comes two weeks after Christian families were allegedly assaulted and driven away following coordinated attacks in over a dozen villages in the district.

Some of the injured persons told journalists that the attack was carried out by a mob of nearly 400 to 500 – that comprised people from Gorra village and outsiders – on nearly a dozen Christians.

"We were called to attend a meeting and when we reached, we were attacked with sticks and even thrones. They accused us of following a foreign religion and forced us to take shelter in the nearby forests," said one of the women victims.

A senior police officer, however, described it as a clash between two groups and said that eight persons were injured. Sources from the ground further claimed that such incidents were reported from other villages too.

Thousands visit Bhima Koregaon memorial

The Hindu Bureau
PUNE

The 205th anniversary of the Bhima-Koregaon battle passed without incident as thousands of Ambedkarites from across Maharashtra and the country congregated near the *Ranstambh* (victory pillar) at Perne village in Pune district on Sunday under heavy security cover.

Several prominent politicians, including Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) chief Prakash Ambedkar, Union Minister Ramdas Athawale, and NCP MLA Jitendra Awhad visited the site.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor reports data breach

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Toyota Kirloskar Motor on Sunday reported a data breach in its system but said the extent of intrusion was being confirmed.

The company said it had been "notified by one of its service providers of an incident that might have exposed personal information" of some of its customers. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team had been notified, it added.

APPEAL

Mukilan is 6 years suffering from Germ Cell Tumor, His family is extremely poor and cannot afford the huge expenditure of **Rs.4,00,000/-** to undergo Chemotherapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. He needs your blessings and support. Donations sent by Ch/D.D. favouring **Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged.** The donations sent through Ch/D.D/NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No.60182010063310, IFSC No. CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through **WWS,** Regd. Public Charitable Trust, **Flat No.GF 1, Corddel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006. Ph: 044-42137401/28235324/7338978027. E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com** Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org

WWS

Congress can fulfil dream of a progressive, liberal and secular India: Kharge

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

What lies ahead: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge and Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot in Alwar. PTI

Before the Bharat Jodo Yatra's onward march to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) – through Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab – resumes on January 3, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Sunday posted a New Year message that conveyed the yatra's theme. "Hoping that in 2023, every lane, every village, every city will have a *mohabbat ki dukaan* (a shop that sells love). Wishing everyone a very Happy New Year!" Mr. Gandhi tweeted, with a video collage of his yatra that has been on the road for 108 days before taking a nine-day year-end break.

Though the tweet does not quite answer what is next for the party after the yatra reaches its final destination of Srinagar by January 26, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's New Year message brings clarity to the party's ideological positioning.

"Every Indian should feel that Congress is the medium and vehicle in realising their dreams and aspirations of a secular, progressive and liberal India. Congress has always stood for India, and we need to strengthen this ideological bond and invaluable relationship," the Congress chief said in his message to citizens and party cadres.

But as far as Mr. Gandhi's plans are concerned, they still seem to be unclear. "The other day somebody was asking me 'what next?' He was saying we should start planning what to do after the yatra. Someone else was saying we should start an east-west yatra, some others were saying something else. Look, this yatra is telling us something. If we get onto doing something without listening to what the yatra is telling us, it will be insulting the voices of the people of India," he said.

The party is working out various ground-level contact programmes in an effort to reconnect with the voters in 2023.

On January 5, Mr. Kharge will launch the Bihar edition of the yatra that will travel across the State. "The idea is to keep the momentum going by carrying forward the goodwill and message generated by Rahul *ji*'s yatra," senior Congress leader Kishore Kumar Jha said.

Similar yatras have been carried out in States that have not been covered by the main route of the BJY and they include Assam, Tripura and Odisha. West Bengal too will have its own version of the march.

Follow-up campaign

From January 26, the party has already announced the *Haath se haath jodo abhiyaan*, a follow-up of the Bharat Jodo Yatra that will focus on connecting with people at the grassroots level. That campaign is expected to continue till March and will culminate in district-level conventions and State-level public rallies.

As part of this campaign, party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will lead foot marches and rallies with women members in State capitals. She will also be leading programmes where women party workers will be focusing on inflation and women-related issues. In his New Year message, Mr. Kharge said, "Let this be the year that we work hard to raise the voice of every Indian, especially the weakest. The onus is on us to save our Constitution and Democratic ethos".

Delimitation can provide safeguards in Assam that NRC could not: Himanta

Chief Minister faults criterion of readjusting Assembly constituencies on the basis of population, says it's akin to punishing those who abide by the two-child policy and rewarding those who don't

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Reaching out: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at an interaction , *Notun Dinor Aalap*, with journalists in Guwahati on Sunday. PTI

The process of delimitation can provide the safeguards that the exercise to update the National Register of Citizens (NRC) could not, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday. But he was critical of the criterion of delimiting Assembly constituencies on the basis of population, which he said was akin to punishing those who abide by the government's two-child policy and rewarding those who disregard this policy to "produce 12 children".

"The NRC was unsuccessful and the Assam Accord did not live up to expectations. Delimitation for redrawing Assembly constituencies can be one exercise through which we can safeguard the future of Assam for two decades by at least ensuring the State Assembly is less affected by demographic changes," Mr. Sarma said told press-persons in a New Year interaction.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had opposed the last delimitation exercise in 2008, insisting that it should be carried out only after the NRC exercise to weed out "illegal immigrants" was completed. The term is often used to mean Muslims who came or relocated from present-day Bangladesh.

Started in October 2013, the Supreme Court-monitored NRC exercise, which cost ₹1,602.66 crore, resulted in the publication of the complete draft of citizens in August 2019. The draft list left out 19.06 lakh people out of the 3.3 crore applications for failing to submit documents proving their citizenship "beyond reasonable doubt".

The BJP and NGOs batting for indigenous people rejected the NRC draft list as faulty and petitioned the top court for a revision. The general belief is that more than 40 lakh "Bangladeshis" have been living in the State illegally since August 25, 1971 – the cut-off date for detecting, detaining and deporting such people according to the Assam Accord of 1985.

The Assam Accord prescribes constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards to eventually reduce the political representation of non-indigenous communities. "Delimitation is being done in the interest of Assam and its (indigenous) people. But the exercise is non-political, based on the 2001 Census," Mr. Sarma said.

"After the emotions associated with the Assam Agitation and NRC, it is time to follow logic and take tough decisions for the sake of the race and the country. The calculation is simple: each of Assam's 126 constituencies should have 2.11 lakh voters if the 2.55 crore people as in 2001 are divided equally with a margin of 10%," he said. "We cannot undertake the delimitation this time on the mandated policy of going by population. But I believe Parliament has to debate the population benchmark for the next exercise, as it invariably rewards people for having more children against government policies and punishes others who follow the rules to have smaller families," the Chief Minister said.

Mamata vows to strengthen India's federal structure

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday congratulated Trinamool Congress workers on the party's 25th foundation day, saying the party would "continue to strengthen the federal structure of our great country".

"Our journey began on January 1, 1998; through all these years, we have been committed to always keeping nation first, people first. Today we remember the many sacrifices and unrelenting efforts of each and every member of our Trinamool family," Ms. Banerjee said in a Facebook post. "All those who have supported us from the very beginning and our new members who have joined from different States, we will continue to strengthen the federal structure of our great country; we dedicate ourselves to serve the people and commit ourselves again to ensure their welfare," she added.

The Trinamool Congress was founded in 1998 and it formed the government in West Bengal in 2011 after defeating the Left Front.

Trinamool leader Abhishek Banerjee spoke about a host of issues, including the upcoming panchayat elections. He said the elections would be held peacefully.

He has made similar assurances in the past but violence has erupted even before the dates for the polls have been announced.

EPFO staff, pensioners seek clarity on circular to implement SC verdict

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The circular has given the green signal to exercise the option to claim higher pension

The headquarters of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is likely to come up with yet another circular on implementing the recent Supreme Court order on higher pension. EPFO employees have sought further clarifications on the circular released by the EPFO head office on December 29 that laid out certain procedures for submitting "options" for eligible pensioners and employees covered under the EPFO. Activists on pensioners' rights had also voiced concerns against the circular.

R. Krupakaran, general secretary of the All India EPF Staff Federation, said the circular, based on the verdict, has given the green signal to exercise the option to claim higher pension for people who are currently working too.

Need proper guidelines

"We have not sent or processed any 'options' as of now, but definitely our work will increase manifold in the coming days. Since the limit of salary is just ₹15,000, more and more workers are likely to opt for this scheme of higher pension. A proper guidelines must be made available to all EPFO offices," he said.

The Federation had given a detailed representation to the EPFO authorities on the delay in framing the guidelines for implementing the Supreme Court order.

"The circular is silent about the proper implementation of the Supreme Court verdict. It has also failed to communicate how new applications have to be processed," he said, adding that without a new clarification, the process of adding "options" cannot be completed in a proper manner.

Staff crunch

Mr. Krupakaran said that at present, EPFO offices are working with a small number of people in the pension sections. "Recruiting more people is the only solution. Without more staff, the EPFO will not be able to satisfy the requirements of pensioners and workers," he added.

Parveen Kohli, an activist for pensioners' rights, feared an attempt to hide the real facts from the Supreme Court as certain review petitions have also reached before the court. He said the December 29 circular was "just to confuse everyone", and for trying to escape contempt of court.

"The EPFO is supposed to comply with paragraph 44 (ix) of the judgment within eight weeks from November 4. It is a fact that the *R.C. Gupta judgment* has already been implemented through the circular dated March 23, 2017, and the pensions of 24,672 employees who retired before September 1, 2014, has also been revised. This fact had been suppressed by the EPFO from the Supreme Court," Mr. Kohli said.

Militants shoot dead 3 civilians in Rajouri

Peerzada Ashiq
JAMMU/SRINAGAR

Militants carrying automatic rifles barged into at least three houses near Rajouri in the Pir Panjal Valley of Jammu and Kashmir and killed three civilians and injured at least seven on Sunday.

Witnesses claimed militants came down from a forest area to the upper Dungri area around 7 p.m. They entered the houses and fired indiscriminately. The militants managed to escape after the attack.

It is for the first time in more than a decade that members of the minority community have faced an attack of this scale in Rajouri.

"An incident of firing allegedly by two armed men was reported in village Dungri, seven to eight km from Rajouri. Firing took place at three houses separated at a distance of around 50 metres from each other. Two civilians have died of their injuries and four others are injured," a senior police officer said.

However, officials at the Government Medical College, Rajouri, put the total number of people hit by bullets at 10.

"Two were brought dead. One died later," they said. The deceased were identified as Satish Kumar, Deepak Kumar and Pritam Lal.

One injured in Srinagar

In Srinagar, one civilian was injured when militants lobbed a grenade on a CRPF vehicle in Zadibal.

In another case, the police said they arrested a youth who snatched a rifle from a CRPF jawan in south Kashmir's Pulwama.

Rahul's 'aura' can bring political change: Raut

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday said Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's leadership found a new "aura" last year and if the trend continued in 2023, the country may see a political change in the next Lok Sabha election.

In his weekly column *Rokhthok* in the Sena mouthpiece *Saamana*, Mr. Raut also said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah should not sow "seeds of hatred and divisiveness".

As the Ram temple issue was settled and no votes could be sought on the matter, a new "love jihad" angle was being explored, he said.

Referring to the death of actor Tunisha Sharma last month and the murder of Shraddha Walkar allegedly by her boyfriend, Mr. Raut asserted these were not cases of "love jihad", but maintained that no woman should face atrocities.

KARNATAKA MARITIME BOARD, GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

RFP for Development of All-Weather Deepwater Port at Pavinakurve, Karnataka under Public Private Partnership Model (CALL -2)

Karnataka Maritime Board invites proposal from established players in the Ports & Maritime Sector to setup greenfield Ports at Pavinkurve (Lat:14°18'49.3"N Long: 74° 24'52.8"E). For detailed Request for Proposal, Project Information Memorandum and Draft Concession Agreement, Please visit Karnataka e-Procurement website: **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in**

DIPR/ADK/MCA/783/22-23 dt.30.12.2022

Sd/-, Chief Executive Officer, Karnataka Maritime Board

TAMIL NADU LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT AGENCY,
IV Floor, Integrated Office Complex for Animal Husbandry & Fisheries Department,
571, Anna Salai, Saidapet Veterinary Polyclinic Campus, Nandanam P.O., Chennai - 35.
e-mail: tnlda2016@gmail.com

Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are invited for the following items under "Two Cover System"

Liquid Nitrogen		33,61,600 liters
Imported Empty Mini Straws (0.25 ml) and Imported Universal AI Sheaths	Straws	58.36 lakh numbers.
	Sheaths	52.80 lakh numbers.

Pre-Bid meeting on 10.01.2023 – 11.30 am
Individual tender documents with full details can be downloaded free of cost from www.tenders.tn.gov.in upto **31.01.2023, 5.00 pm**
Last date for submission of tenders:**01.02.2023, 11.00 am**
Corrigendum/Addendum to this publication, if any, would appear only on the above website
DIPR/5870/Tender/2022

Chief Executive Officer.

சோதனை கடந்து சுதந்திரம் அடைந்தோம். சாதனை புரிந்து சரித்திரம் படைப்போம்.

PIMPRI CHINCHWAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
CIVIL ENGINEERING 'D' HO DEPARTMENT
TENDER NOTICE No: - CIVIL/DHO/62/1/2022-2023

Offers by way of e-tendering (Percentage) are invited by the Joint City Engineer, Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation from contractors in e-tendering system for following works.
1) The contractor shall quote his Percentage offer on the Cost of work excluding material testing charges as mentioned below.
2) The offer for work shall be exclusive of GST. The GST at the applicable rate shall be paid separately by PCMC for work
3) For Following works Regarding the Royalty, the policy that the corporation determines will be binding on you.

Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated cost put to the Tender (Rs) (4+6)	Cost of Work excluding Material testing charges (Rs)	Royalty (Rs)	Testing Charges (Rs)	Earnest money (Rs)	Security Deposit (Rs)	Time limit in calendar Months	Cost of Tender Document With G.S.T (Non refundable) (Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Civil DHO								
1.	Remaining work of School building in R. No. 4/23 at ward No. 25 Wakad	23,56,65,941	23,54,76,921	2,29,418	1,89,020	11,78,330	1,17,83,297	18	37,430

Time table for the tenders shall be as follows:

Online sale of tenders	:-	Date 02/01/2023 to Date 16/01/2023
Last date of submission of tenders	:-	Date 16/01/2023 up to 3.00 pm
Pre Bid Meeting Date and Time	:-	Date 06/01/2023 at 3.00 pm (In the Office City Engineer First floor PCMC)
Date of opening of tenders	:-	Date 18/01/2023 at 03.00 Pm (if possible)

The Municipal Commissioner PCMC reserves the right to accept or reject any tender partially or completely without any reason thereof. The details of above works, such as Security Deposit, Earnest Money Deposit, Terms & Conditions of the Tender and Schedule of works, are available on web site www.pcmcindia.gov.in, http://mahatenders.gov.in. In case of any technical problem related to the tender document, the same can be referred to the NIC email support-eproc@nic.in or on telephone numbers 0120-4200462, 0120-4001002, 0120-4001005,0120- 627787

Sd/-
(Dnyandev Jundhare)
Joint City Engineer
Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation
Pimpri – 411 018.

ADVT No. 411
No: ENGG/TEN/DHO/433/2022
Date :- 30/12/2022

INBRIEF

Politicians, others attend prayer meet for PM's mother

Many political leaders and well-wishers attended a prayer meet organised in the memory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Hiraben at the his birthplace Vadnagar in Gujarat on Sunday. Hiraben passed away aged 99 in Ahmedabad on Friday. Traders in Vadnagar had called for a three-day self-imposed market bandh from Friday as a tribute to her. PTI

ICCR felicitates foreign artists of Indian classical arts

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) on Sunday felicitated foreign artists of Indian dance and music from countries selected through a first-of-its-kind talent recognition initiative. These artists, selected from eight to 10 countries, will perform at *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* event which will be held in Indore, ICCR president Vinay Sahasrabuddhe said. PTI

A labour of love, archive on BHU founder takes shape

Jagriti Chandra
VARANASI

To create an archive on the principal founder of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), 'Mahamana' Madan Mohan Malaviya, Dhrub Singh, a Professor of History at the university, along with two of his assistants, traversed the country for over nearly a decade to give shape to their labour of love. They visited the National Archives of India and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in Delhi; various State archives such as that of Maharashtra; and princely archives, including the one at Lallgarh Palace in Bikaner and those of the Maharajas of Jodhpur and Darbhanga. They researched private papers of Malaviya's contemporaries, including paleo-botanist Birbal Sahni and other BHU founding members such as Rai Bahadur Sir Sunder Lal, and Annie Besant at the Theosophical Society in Chennai; and perused old newspapers and magazines.

In December 2011, at a commemoration event to mark Malaviya's 150th birth anniversary, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced various projects under the Culture Ministry to celebrate his life and achievements, including a repository dedicated to the BHU's founder. A national implementation committee was set up under the chairmanship of Karan Singh, then Rajya Sabha member and Chancellor of BHU, to oversee the execution of various projects.

Archive layout

Professor Singh was entrusted with the responsibility of setting up the archive at an initial cost of ₹40 lakh extended by the University Grants Commission and the Culture Ministry. Nearly 10 years later, the mammoth task has neared completion. Housed in the Mahamana 150th Birth Centenary Building, the archive comprises 25 different categories of documents, including his speeches in the Imperial Legislative Council, interventions in the Congress, evidence from various commissions, and other landmark events during the Freedom Struggle such as his defence of accused protesters in the Chauri Chaura incident of February 1922 participating in the Non-cooperation Movement.

Finish line: Professor Dhrub Singh started the project in 2011 which now has 25 different categories of documents. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

There is also a collection of more than 1,000 photographs of Malviya, including those taken at the time the university was being set up, such as an image where he can be seen conducting a land survey, as well as pictures from a donation drive across the country during which he was accompanied by the Maharaja of Darbhanga, Rameshwar Singh, to raise the ₹1 crore needed to set up the university.

The team of five, which also includes two administrative staff, has also collected several newspapers and magazines Malaviya was involved with, including a Hindi language weekly, the *Abhyudaya* (1907); the *Leader of Allahabad*, an English-language daily (1909); and the Hindi dailies such as *Aaj*, which also covered daily activities at the BHU.

As Malaviya played an important role in the Hindi Nagari movement, resources were also collected from the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, the 129-year-old society for promotion of Nagari in Varanasi, which played a significant role in developing a standard grammar for modern Hindi, gathering rare manuscripts, publishing Hindi's first dictionaries, encyclopaedias and journals.

Going digital

"We are now starting the process of digitising and cataloguing the documents and various resources so that readers have better access. The archive will continue to be a work in progress and we will continue to acquire documents from different sources we discover. We are also trying to get traces of his [Malaviya's] voice and films made on him, and have already started a gift register where anyone can donate memorabilia associated with Malaviya, and we will preserve the gift under the contributor's name," Professor Singh said.

Though Malaviya was a Hindu nationalist leader who helped set up the Hindu Mahasabha, Professor Singh said historical documents show the 106-year-old university was truly national in its character. "The name BHU includes the word Hindu but in its character, conduct, recruitment and intake of students, it was truly national. There was no sectarianism. In the early years of BHU, there were Muslim boys and girls graduating. When he [Malaviya] spoke about Hindu, he had a community in mind that had to evolve and acquire positive elements of the religion, but not the exclusion of other religious communities from the university. In his convocation address in 1929, he proudly states students came from States such as Andhra, Punjab, Kerala, which shows he was conscious that he was building a national institution," Professor Singh added.

R.K. Krishnakumar

Former Tata Sons director Krishnakumar passes away

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

R.K. Krishnakumar, a Tata Group veteran and considered a close confidant of Ratan Tata, passed away in Mumbai on Sunday due to cardiac arrest. He was 84.

Krishnakumar was a director in Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group. Earlier, he was the vice-chairman of India Hotels Company Ltd.

In a statement Ratan Tata said, "Words cannot describe the deep sense of loss I feel on the passing of my friend and colleague Mr. R.K. Krishnakumar. I will always fondly remember the camaraderie we shared both within the group and personally. He was a true veteran of the Tata group and the Tata Trusts and will be missed dearly by all."

PM Modi to address 108th Indian Science Congress tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually address the 108th Indian Science Congress (ISC) on January 3, which is expected to focus on ways to increase the representation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. It is an effort to provide them with equal access to STEM education keeping in line with this year's theme of "Science and technology for sustainable development with women empowerment".

Among a slew of events scheduled to be held alongside the 108th ISC, will be the Children's Science Congress and the Farmers' Science Congress. Additionally, the Tribal Science Congress will be held to platform the "scientific display of indigenous ancient knowledge system and practice".

The event, scheduled to be held at the Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, will also see lectures by renowned women in STEM as part of a special programme, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office said.

This comes as Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh on Sunday outlined the Centre's 2023 Science Vision, which he said will "define India at 2047".

Mr. Singh said the ISRO's key focus areas is on scientific exploration missions, technology demonstrations, and human spaceflight programme Gaganyan, in 2024.

Blue Economy

At the same time, the Earth Sciences Ministry will be focusing on deep sea missions and technologies to find ways of adding value to India's economy in times to come, the Minister said, adding that this year will also see further headway in "Blue Economy", an umbrella term used for economic benefits derivable from the larger marine ecosystem.

In addition, the Department of Atomic Energy will be delivering about 21 lakh equipment for the Election Commission of India, which will include Ballot Units, Control Units, and VVPATs, to be completed by the ECIL between September and October, this year.

Centre, States to join hands to promote millets consumption

Union Ministry of Sports will celebrate International Year of Millets in Jan., along with the governments of Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Rajasthan

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In an effort to promote cultivation and consumption of millets on a larger scale, the Union government, with the help of various States and Indian embassies around the globe, has launched the International Year of Millets (IYM) on Sunday. Union Ministries, States and Indian embassies have been allocated a 'focussed month' each in 2023 to promote millets. In January, Union Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, and the Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Rajasthan governments will conduct IYM events and activities.

The Sports Ministry has planned 15 activities over 15 days in January which include engaging sportspersons, nutritionists and fitness experts through video messages, conducting webinars on millets with leading nutritionists, dieticians and elite athletes, promotion amplification through Fit India app and so on, the government said in a release. The Food Processing Industries Ministry will organise millet fair-cum-exhibitions in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh this month and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India will organise "Eat Right" *Melas* in Punjab, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Stay fit: The Prime Minister at the celebration of the 'International Year of Millets 2023' in New Delhi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Rajasthan will conduct food festivals and train farmers on millets cultivation. Awareness campaigns, workshops/ seminars will also be held. "Other States that are organising similar activities in January include Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Punjab," the Union Agriculture Ministry said in a release.

"Millets are important by virtue of their mammoth potential to generate livelihoods, increase farmers' income and ensure food and nutritional security all over the world," the Ministry said.

U.P. panel on OBC quota to submit first report in 3 months

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

The committee will visit all 75 districts in Uttar Pradesh and conduct a triple-test survey

The committee formed by the Uttar Pradesh government to look into the reservation for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in local bodies is likely to submit its preliminary report in three months, and will take two or three more months to complete the remaining procedures.

Speaking with presspersons after the panel's first meeting, the committee's Chairman, Justice Ram Avtar Singh (retd.), said that the guidelines of the Supreme Court and the High Court would be followed in letter and spirit regarding the reservation for OBCs in urban civic bodies. "The committee will submit its first report in the next three months. The remaining necessary procedures will be completed in a period of two or three months," the Chairman said.

Six-month deadline

The committee added that the work would be completed within the six-month deadline stipulated by the State government. The committee will visit all the 75 districts of the State to get accurate data in the triple-test survey. It will also study related cases from States such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

Amid criticism from Opposition parties after the Allahabad High Court decision directing the Uttar Pradesh government to conduct urban local body elections in the State without the OBC quota, the State government last week constituted a five-member committee to look into the issue.

The panel will conduct a triple-test formula, and the OBC reservation for municipal polls will be decided on the basis of the report.

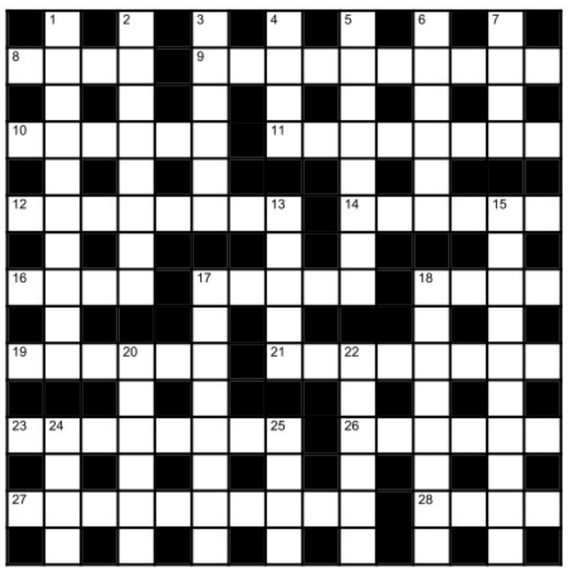
Apart from Justice Singh, the five-member committee has retired IAS officers Chob Singh Verma and Mahendra Kumar, former legal advisor Santosh Kumar Vishwakarma and former additional legal advisor and additional district judge Brijesh Kumar Soni.

TH CROSSWORD + 13752

(set by WrdPlougher)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 Stuff-renouncing saint admitting hoarding initially instead, in a bad mood (4)
9 Contrives to lose, both sides chasing leaderless team in central square (10)
10 Played demure Tully in a 'Game...' show? (6)
11 Saying "Oh!", get map in a pickle (8)
12 Excited about the drill (8)
14 Move a muscle, take by force (6)
16 Unproductive bank (4)
17 First fled, burying upturned white-blue speckled vase (5)
18 Actor is animated: "I'm me" (4)
19 Lacking coach, essentially teach no kind of music (6)
21 Without anyone's help, solver... (8)
23 ... partially gets convoluted clue without second-guessing setter, conundrum finally grasped, basically fills a square containing next seed? (4,4)
26 Screen contents of blood (6)
27 Rant about modern oeuvre, without regard to gamut (regularly selected) of early 20th-Century paintings (3,7)
28 Complain about train lacking internet at first (4)

Down

1 Messy crude science without substance about revolutionary quark (4,6)
2 Outpouring of grief — milieu ultimately engulfed in escalating pandemonium (8)
3 Issue a sharp report (like a pig or a rat perhaps) (6)
4 Information found at app stores (4)
5 Proud parrot, chanter in essence, absorbing song at last (8)
6 Runs topless out of an old hood, not wearing shoes (6)
7 Young women raising plant — waste? (4)
13 Foolish old one that means to waste time along with dally (5)
15 Tribute that may be paid to court? (10)
17 Pair of French buns sent back unwrapped by Masterchef's first food channel? (8)
18 Abort Mission Impossible right in the middle of frightening... (8)
20 ... kind of hostage situation — CIA counter-terrorism bureau reach, finally retreating (6)
22 Peacekeepers advertise: "Relax!" (6)
24 To some extent, fear none, get rich (4)
25 Invented German song (4)

SUDOKU

					8		6	5
4		5	3					
	2					3		1
	8	9			5			
5			2		7			6
			9			5	3	
7		2					9	
					6	2		4
8	9		7					

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

Q	K	T	M	W	J	S	L	
U	V	A	R	O	V	I	T	E
A	N	O	D	L	I	U	A	
F	I	G	H	T	E	R	L	I
L	Y	P	A	D	F	A	H	I
B	F	S	C	R	A	P	B	A
R	K	E	E	P	E	R	O	A
E	Q	E	C	R	O	S	S	W
O	R	D	P	U	Z	Z	L	E
H	T	V	I	E	L	E	X	T
R	E	M	E	L	Y	L	O	P
E	S	E	O	R	E	I	P	M
S	U	B	J	E	C	T	S	U
B	Z	E	R	O	I	I	X	U
M	R	L	G	E	X	T	R	A
R	E	A	L	I	Z	I	N	G
R	S	M	E	N	A	N	Y	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

6	1	2	4	3	7	8	9	5
3	5	8	9	2	6	4	7	1
9	7	4	8	1	5	3	2	6
5	3	9	6	7	2	1	8	4
2	6	7	1	4	8	9	5	3
4	8	1	5	9	3	2	6	7
1	4	6	2	5	9	7	3	8
7	2	5	3	8	4	6	1	9
8	9	3	7	6	1	5	4	2

FAITH

Heavenly Vaikunta Ekadasi

Devotees across the world put aside all other work and observe Vaikunta Ekadasi each year with reverence and fervour as it is the day Vishnu opens the heavenly portals, as it were, for mortals and even devas, said Dhamal Ramakrishnan in a discourse. Ekam signifies one and dasam is the numeral ten, totalling eleven. At an equidistant 11 days from new moon day and full moon day, the eleventh day in a month is ekadasi. Every calendar year, we have between 24 and 25 ekadasis, wherein devotees try and observe the ritual of fasting. However, ekadasi in the month of Margazhi is extremely special as it is the day the Vaikunta vaasal (gate) is thrown open, allowing devotees uninterrupted darshan of Vishnu.

According to Padma Purana, Muran, a demon, was harassing the saints and devas. Unable to bear it, they all seek Siva's help. However, pointing out that Muran had secured immunity even from Vishnu's weapons of conch and chakra, He advises them to seek saranagati with Vishnu and gain His help. Ever ready to help His devotees, Vishnu engages in solo combat with Muran and due to the demon's boons, the battle goes on for long. Vishnu decides to take a break and seeks refuge in a cave in Badrinath to rest. However, Muran follows Vishnu and when he tries to catch Him unawares, a female form springs up and vanquishes the demon. She is none other than Ekadasi. When Vishnu blesses her, she seeks a boon – whosoever observes ekadasi virat, focuses the mind on god and observes fast, should be granted mukti. Vishnu grants her request, which is why Vaikunta Ekadasi is also known as Moksha Ekadasi.

KABUL

Several killed, wounded in blast near Kabul military airfield: official

AP

An explosion at the entrance to a military airfield in the Afghan capital killed and wounded several people on Sunday, an official said. The cause of the blast at the gate of the facility next to Kabul's international airport was unclear, Interior Ministry spokesman Abdul Nafy Takor said. AFP

ZAGREB

Croatia adopts euro, enters borderless Europe club

AFP

Croatia on Sunday switched to the euro and entered Europe's borderless zone — two steps Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic called a "historic moment". The Balkan nation bid farewell to its kuna currency and became the 20th member of the eurozone. It is also now the 27th nation in the passport-free Schengen zone. AFP

KAMPALA

9 killed in stampede at Uganda mall during New Year celebrations

AFP

A stampede during New Year's celebrations at a popular mall in Uganda's capital, Kampala, left at least nine people dead, including children, the police said on Sunday. The stampede happened at the Freedom City Mall in Namasuba suburb as revellers rushed to watch fireworks. AP

LOS ANGELES

Grammy-winning singer Anita Pointer dies of cancer at 74

AP

Grammy-winning singer Anita Pointer died on Saturday at the age of 74 following a battle with cancer, her publicist said. One of the founding members of R&B group The Pointer Sisters, she delighted fans across the world with hits, including "I'm So Excited," "Jump," and "Fire." AFP

Pope pays homage to 'beloved' Benedict

Agence France-Presse
VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis hailed the "beloved" Benedict XVI on Sunday as he addressed thousands of Catholics in New Year's Day services at the Vatican, the day after his predecessor died aged 95.

"Today we entrust the beloved Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI to the most holy mother [the Virgin Mary], to accompany him in his passage from this world to God," Pope Francis said at a mass for peace at St. Peter's Basilica.

Later, delivering his Sunday Angelus prayer in front of thousands gathered in St. Peter's Square, the Pope bowed his head in a moment of silence in memory of the late pontiff.

Funeral on Thursday

Benedict, a conservative intellectual who in 2013 became the first pontiff in six centuries to resign, died on Saturday at his home in a monastery inside the grounds of the Vatican.

His body will be moved on Monday morning to St Peter's Basilica, where for three days the public will be able to pay their respects before a funeral on Thursday. The ceremony will be "solemn but simple", the Vatican has said, after which he will be buried in the papal tombs under St Peter's Basilica.

Ukrainians cheer New Year as Russian drones are shot down

Kyiv says it destroyed 45 Iranian-made Shahed drones; defiant residents shout praise for the country as sirens of air raid blare in the city

Reuters
KYIV/DONETSK PROVINCE
FRONT LINE

Symbol of hope: A Ukrainian firefighter receives New Year's gifts at their station in Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine on Saturday. AFP

Ukrainians cheered from their balconies while their air defences blasted Russian missiles and drones out of the sky in the first hours of 2023, as Moscow saw in the New Year by attacking civilian targets across Ukraine.

Ukraine's Air Force command said it had destroyed 45 Iranian-made Shahed drones overnight – 32 of them on Sunday after midnight and 13 late on Saturday.

That was on top of 31 missile attacks and 12 air strikes across the country in 24 hours.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signalled no letup to his assault on Ukraine, in a grim and defiant New Year's speech that contrasted with a hopeful message of gratitude and unity from Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky.

As sirens blared in Kyiv, some people shouted from their balconies, "Glory to Ukraine! Glory to heroes!"

Fragments from the late-night attack caused minimal damage in the capital's centre, and preliminarily reports indicated there were no wounded or casualties, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said on social media. Attacks earlier on Saturday had hit residential buildings and a hotel in the capital, killing at least one person and injuring more than 20.

'War crimes'

At the front line in Urkaine's eastern Donetsk Province, troops toasted the New Year. Soldier Pavlo Pryzhehodskiy, 27, played a song on guitar he had written at the front after 12 of his comrades were killed in a single night.

"It is sad that instead of meeting friends, celebrating and giving gifts to one another people were forced to seek shelter, some were killed," he said. "It is a huge tragedy. It is a huge tragedy that cannot ever be forgiven. That is why the New Year is sad."

Since October, Russia has launched mass missile and drone attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, casting cities into darkness and cold as winter sets in.

Moscow says the strikes aim to reduce Ukraine's ability to fight; Kyiv says they have no military purpose and are intended to hurt civilians, a war crime.

Lula returns for third term as Brazil President, event held under tight lid

Agence France-Presse
BRASÍLIA

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office on Sunday for a third term as President of Brazil, capping a remarkable comeback for the veteran leftist after he defeated far-right leader Jair Bolsonaro in October elections.

The 77-year-old ex-metalworker, who previously led Brazil from 2003 to 2010, took the oath of office before Congress, vowing to "maintain, defend and obey the Constitution" as he returned to lead Latin America's biggest economy after a bitterly divisive election.

Sunday's swearing-in capped a remarkable political comeback for 77-year-old Lula, who returns to the presidential palace in Brasilia less than five years after being jailed on controversial, since-quashed corruption charges.

By the book: Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (left) waving to supporters on his way to the National Congress, in Brasilia, on Sunday. AFP

Stepped-up measures

In a sign of the scars that remain from Mr. Lula's brutal election showdown with far-right ex-Army Captain Bolsonaro in October, security was exceptionally tight at the pomp-filled ceremony in the capital.

Some 8,000 police – including more than 1,000 federal officers, a record deployment for a presidential inauguration in Brazil – provided security.

The stepped-up measures come after a Bolsonaro supporter was arrested last week for planting a tanker truck rigged with explosives near the Brasilia airport, a plot he said aimed to "sow chaos" in the South American country. Mr. Bolsonaro himself left Brazil for Florida in the United States on Friday – reportedly to avoid having to hand the presidential sash to his bitter enemy, as tradition dictates.

Thousands of Lula supporters have been flooding the capital, travelling by plane, car and even bicycle to camp out near the Esplanade of Ministries.

It was the first time since the end of Brazil's 1965-1985 military dictatorship that an incoming President does not receive the yellow-and-green sash from his predecessor.

Growing concerns

Strict scrutiny: Passengers of a flight from China wait in a line for checking their COVID-19 vaccination documents at an airport in Paris on Sunday. Australia and Canada joined the U.S., U.K., India, France and several European nations in imposing tougher COVID-19 measures on Chinese travellers. AFP

'Militiaman killed in central Iran protest'

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

A member of Iran's security forces has been shot dead during protests in the city of Semirom, state media said on Sunday, more than 100 days after Mahsa Amini's death sparked nationwide unrest.

Iran has been rocked by protests – dubbed "riots" by the authorities – since Amini, 22, died in custody on September 16 following her arrest for an alleged breach of the country's strict dress code for women.

"A Basij member was killed in the city of Semirom by armed criminals," official news agency *IRNA* reported, referring to the paramilitary force linked to the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Iranian officials say hundreds of people have been killed in the nationwide unrest, including members of the security forces, and thousands arrested.

Tehran accuses hostile foreign powers and opposition groups of stoking the unrest.

One soldier, four militants killed in Pak.

Associated Press
ISLAMABAD

An Army operation in Pakistan's northwest targeting militants triggered a firefight that left a soldier and four fighters dead, the Army's media wing said on Sunday. This comes weeks after Pakistani Taliban detainees seized control of a counter-terrorism centre.

Kim orders expansion of nuclear arsenal

Associated Press
SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un ordered the "exponential" expansion of his country's nuclear arsenal and the development of a more powerful intercontinental ballistic missile, state media reported on Sunday, after he entered 2023 with another weapons launch following a record number of testing activities last year.

Mr. Kim's moves are in line with the broad direction of his nuclear program. He has repeatedly vowed to boost both the quality and quantity of his arsenal to cope with what he calls U.S. hostility. Some experts say Mr. Kim's push signals his intention to solidify his future negotiating power.

THE HINDU GROUP

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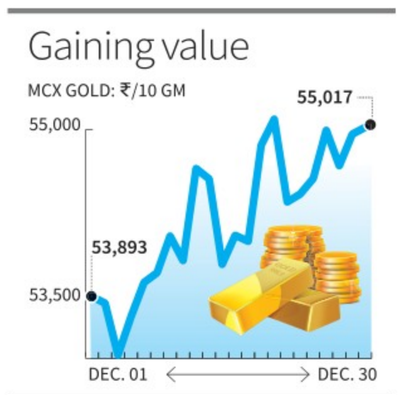
THE HINDU Margazhi Music Contest

THE HINDU

To register, log in to **https:/bit.ly/THMMC22** or scan the QR code.
Mail us at **events@thehindu.co.in** to know more.

A BG-BGE



PRECIOUSMETALS

Gold, silver consolidate on gains

B. Krishnakumar

Precious metals consolidated the gains recorded in November and managed to end December on a positive note. Gold prices gained almost $200 from a more than two-year low recorded in September, on hopes that the U.S. central bank might slow its pace of interest rate increases.

The subdued trend in the U.S. dollar played a key role in helping precious metals consolidate the gains recorded in November. Comex gold gained 3.7% in December to end the month at $1,826.2 per ounce. Comex silver recorded a much stronger rally of 10.5% to close at $24.04.

Mirroring the global trend, precious metals closed on a strong note in the domestic markets too. MCX gold gained 3.9% to settle at ₹55,017 per 10 gm. MCX silver gained 9.4% to end at ₹69,413 per kg.

Silver outperforms

Apart from the firm trend in these metals witnessed in the last couple of months, an interesting development is silver's outperformance compared with gold. The relative performance chart of these two metals suggests that silver was outperforming gold and there is a case for the trend to sustain in the near term.

Though Comex gold ruled firm, the target of $1,870-1,880 mentioned in December is yet to be achieved. The short-term outlook remains positive and Comex gold appears on course to reach this target zone.

However, a drop below the recent low at $1,740 would be a cause for concern. This would invalidate the outlook and delay the journey towards the target zone.

Positive outlook

The price action in Comex silver was in sync with November's expectations. Unlike Comex gold, silver managed to achieve the target of $24.5-$25. The short-term outlook is positive and Comex silver is likely to head to the immediate target of $25.5-$26.

A move above $24.6 will strengthen the case for a rise to the target zone. On the other hand, a fall below $23 will be a sign of weakness and can invalidate the positive view.

In the domestic market, the metals managed to seek higher levels. MCX gold ruled firm and reached the ₹55,000-55,500 target. In the short-term, MCX gold is likely to head to the next target of ₹56,700-57,500.

The short-term positive outlook would be confirmed if the price moves above ₹55,400. However, a fall below ₹53,900 would invalidate the possibility of a rise to this target zone.

MCX silver ruled firm in December and moved well beyond the target zone of ₹65,000-65,500. The short-term outlook remains positive, and the price is likely to head to the next target zone of ₹71,750-72,500.

The positive outlook for MCX silver would be confirmed on a move above ₹70,000. A fall below ₹65,000 would and invalidate the view. To summarise, the short-term outlook for precious metals remains positive in the short-term. There are increasing signs suggesting that the prior downtrend for precious metals might be over. Keep a tab on the key levels mentioned above for confirmation of the short-term direction.

(The writer is a Chennai-based analyst / trader. This is not meant to be trading or investment advice)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Clarity on building your financial plan

Setting financial goals, fixing timelines and choosing investments need to be well thought out, with as much time spent on them as required; investing is as important as earning money

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Joydeep Sen

If you are a do-it-yourself (DIY) investor and want to know how to go about your financial planning, the basics are just a Google search away. To jot down the basics:

Set financial goals – put financial numbers to your emotional goals.

Plan for retirement – estimate future expenses adjusted for inflation.

Make a budget – for your expenses and savings.

Channelise savings into appropriate investments.

Have adequate term insurance cover, and so on.

Today, we will discuss one requirement to help prepare a financial plan, even if you are taking inputs from a professional adviser. And that is, your own clarity. Let us see what it means and why it is required.

Your goals

Financial planning requires converting your emotional life goals to measurable terms.

Here you need to have clarity on what you want to do in life, and the order of priority. It could be conventional goals like purchase of a home, a car, budgeting for a vacation, children's education, marriage, and the like.

It could also be unconventional goals such as early retirement or pursuing your passion.

The clarity you require is in terms of time and money; there is only so much you can do in life. You have to put timelines and priorities to these. That will lead to more focussed savings and investments for these goals. Once you decide for yourself, you have to put down the estimate in terms of money.

The estimate may not be accurate, but is better than not having an estimate. Once your goals are set, it can change. Nothing is fixed in life. However, any change, either in a goal or in priorities or timeline, should be a well thought-out one. There is a difference between being fickle-minded and taking a considered decision.

> Even after your goals are set, they can change. Nothing is fixed in life. But, any change, either in a goal or in priorities or timeline, should be given due consideration

Your investments

This is where there is a big need to have clarity.

When you are deciding on your investments, especially if you are DIY, you would look at past returns from that avenue. You have to look at not only the past performance but past volatility as well.

In particular, what is referred to as a drawdown – the maximum loss or adverse market movement, historically. Unless you have clarity that you can bear that much of volatility, that mode investment may not be suitable for you. You are investing for a goal, with a defined, or at least estimated, time horizon. Unless there is a compelling reason, you need not change your portfolio every now and then.

There is a distinction between trading and investment. Trading is for achieving a particular target price over a short horizon. An investment is for the long horizon, which is not expected to be shuffled due to market fluctuations.

Your investments should be for an objective, which is your financial goal. It should not be influenced by the 'flavour of the times.' There are times when cryptocurrencies are a rage. There are times when the equity market is rallying or gold is gaining ground. Something that is moving up every day and is flashed in front of you, and looks attractive.

You have to avoid these temptations and be clear about what you are investing for and what is appropriate for you.

Existing finances

You may do-it-yourself or you may work with a financial planner. Whatever the case, you have to do your house-keeping. Usually people have staff scattered here and there.

You may have something invested in a few equity stocks because someone had recommended those. There are some mutual fund schemes with you, for a similar reason.

Money is allocated every year to EPF, PPF, etc. There are multiple bank and demat accounts. You have to get everything together, as an inventory. This has to fit in with your overall financial plan.

Conclusion

You are working hard in your job or business or profession, to earn money. This is to save and invest, for what you want to do in life. When you are giving so much time and effort to earning money, you owe it to yourself to do a thorough job when you are investing those earnings.

You need clarity on what you want to do (financial goals), when you want to do (timelines) and how you want to do it (aggressive or conservative investments, and the like).

(The writer is a corporate trainer and author)

Triple dilemma

COVERNOTE

Filling in a salvage buyer's name in the transfer form can leave him handicapped as he would be buying the vehicle only to repair and resell it. Such issues need to be sorted out in the insurance sector

K. Nitya Kalyani

In the previous instalment of Cover Note, we saw how selling a vehicle without duly filling the date and buyer's information in the transfer forms gives room for the buyer to delay transfer of the title to his name and opens the seller up to a whole world of liability.

First off, on selling the vehicle, third-party liability insurance effectively ceases after an interim cover period. After that, should the vehicle be in an accident that damages somebody's property, injures or kills somebody, guess who will be held responsible? The person whose name is on the RC.

In the worse possibility, the vehicle could be used for illegal purposes.

As advised earlier, it is safer to date the transfer papers, fill in the buyer's details and inform the RTA through registered post acknowledgement due giving details about the sale, including the date and identity of the buyer. Please do this however persuasive your buyer is, would be my advice.

However, in this claim case, the salvage buyer pointed out that doing this would handicap him as he was buying the vehicle to repair and resell it as that was his business. Extensive repairs would need about 90 days, he said. The insured was highly hesitant, for his own safety, to sign blank forms.

The issues have to be sorted out by the vehicle insurer, perhaps, via the General Insurance Council, and light thrown on RTA and GST matters.

One other option to avoid both the GST and RTA issues was to get the RC cancelled, in effect making the vehicle non-existent. Since it was not a sale and no transfer of title was involved, GST was irrelevant, was the logic. Transfer issues and liability, if the transfer is deferred, also don't arise.

In another claim of the same insured, his home and contents were covered (by an insurer different from his vehicle insurer) under a fire policy, which includes flood risk. A suitable claim offer for repair of the home and repair/replacement of contents was made and accepted.

When it came to replacement of some contents like appliances, the insurer agreed to foot GST separately. Informally, the company suggested that replacements could be billed to the firm and not the insured, enabling them to avail GST input credit.

The insured shot back that the input credit was his to take and, when he renewed his home insurance, how would the firm insure appliances and furniture not in his name (but in the name of the insurance company)! By now, the insured and the insurers were convinced the former should consult for insurers in addition to his usual industrial clients! The answer to the issues, it seems, belongs right there along with Vikram and vetaal stories!

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks SFB				
AU Small Finance Bank	7.75	6.10	7.75	7.20
Capital Small Finance Bank	7.50	7.10	7.10	7.10
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.50	7.75	7.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.00	5.50	5.75	5.25
Fincare Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.25	7.00	7.00
Jana Small Finance Bank	7.85	7.25	7.85	7.25
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.51	7.00	7.25	6.75
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.50	7.20	7.20
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.50	7.50	7.50
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	7.00	6.75	7.00	7.00
Bandhan Bank	7.50	7.00	7.00	5.60
CSB Bank	7.50	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	7.25	6.25	6.50	6.50
DCB Bank	7.85	7.25	7.85	7.60
HDFC Bank	7.00	6.50	7.00	7.00
ICICI Bank	7.00	6.60	7.00	7.00
IDFC First Bank	7.50	6.75	7.50	7.00
IndusInd Bank	7.25	6.75	6.75	6.75
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	6.50	6.50	6.25	6.25
Karnataka Bank	7.20	6.80	5.75	5.75
Karur Vysya Bank	7.25	6.50	7.00	6.25
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.00	6.75	6.30	6.20
Nainital Bank	6.80	5.75	5.60	5.75
RBL Bank	7.55	7.00	6.55	6.55
SBM Bank India	7.50	6.75	7.00	7.00
South Indian Bank	7.00	6.50	6.50	6.00
TMB	7.00	6.30	6.00	6.00
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	7.05	6.75	6.75	6.25
Bank of India	6.75	6.00	6.50	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	6.30	6.15	6.00	5.75
Canara Bank	7.00	6.75	6.50	6.50
Indian Bank	7.00	6.10	6.25	6.25
Indian Overseas Bank	6.55	6.40	6.50	6.50
Punjab National Bank	7.25	6.30	6.25	6.50
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.00	6.10	6.10	6.10
State Bank of India	6.75	6.75	6.25	6.25
Union Bank of India	7.30	6.30	7.30	6.70
Foreign Banks				
Citibank	7.25	7.25	3.50	3.50
Deutsche Bank	7.25	6.50	7.00	7.00

Home Loan Interest Rates

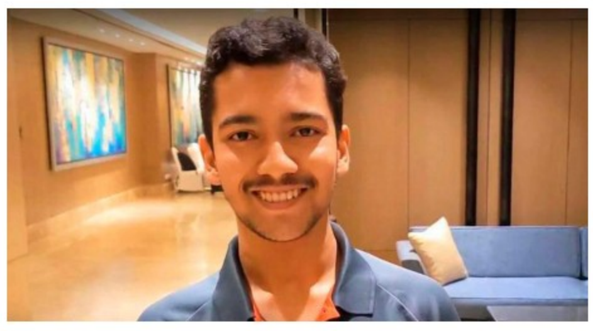
Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(In %)
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	8.75-9.50	8.75-9.40	8.75-9.40
Bank of Baroda	8.60-10.35	8.60-10.35	8.60-10.60
Union Bank of India	8.60-10.50	8.60-10.70	8.60-10.70
Punjab National Bank	8.60 - 9.35	8.55 - 9.25	8.55 - 9.25
Bank of India	8.65-10.60	8.65-10.60	8.65-10.60
Canara Bank	8.55-13.35	8.55-13.35	8.55-13.35
UCO Bank	8.75-9.75	8.75-9.75	8.75-9.75
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.35-10.55	8.35-10.80	8.35-10.80
Punjab and Sind Bank	8.60-9.70	8.60-9.70	8.60-9.70
Indian Overseas Bank	9.30-10.70	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards
Indian Bank	8.50-10.15	8.50-10.15	8.50-10.15
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	8.65 onwards	8.65 onwards	8.65 onwards
ICICI Bank	8.75-9.85	8.75-9.85	8.75-9.85
Axis Bank	8.60-12.70	8.60-12.70	8.60-9.05
HSBC Bank	8.35-9.20	8.35-9.20	8.35-9.20
South Indian Bank	9.25-12.00	9.25-12.00	9.25-12.00
Karur Vysya Bank	8.95-11.85	8.95-11.85	8.95-11.85
Karnataka Bank	8.67-9.99	8.67-9.99	8.67-9.99
Federal Bank	9.90-9.95	9.95-10.00	10.00-10.05
Dhanlaxmi Bank	9.15-10.30	9.15-10.30	9.15-10.30
TMB	8.75-9.25	8.75-9.25	8.75-9.25
Bandhan Bank	8.65-14.00	8.65-14.00	8.65-14.00
RBL Bank	8.90-11.30	8.85-11.05	8.85-11.05
CSB Bank	9.69	9.69	9.94
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	8.65-10.10	8.65-10.30	8.65-10.50
HDFC Ltd.	8.65-10.35	8.65-10.60	8.65-10.70
Bajaj Housing Finance	8.70 onwards	8.70 onwards	8.70 onwards
Tata Capital	>=8.95	>=8.95	>=8.95
PNB Housing Finance	8.75-13.00	8.75-13.00	8.85-10.85
GIC Housing Finance	>=8.10	>=8.10	>=8.10
Repco Home Finance	>=9.00	>=9.00	>=9.00
Aditya Birla Capital	8.50-13.50	8.50-13.50	8.50-13.50
ICICI Home Finance	>=9.20	>=9.20	>=9.20
Godrej Housing Finance	8.39-10.99	8.39-10.99	8.39-10.99
LIC Housing Finance	8.65-10.10	8.65-10.30	8.65-10.50
HDFC Ltd.	8.65-10.35	8.65-10.60	8.65-10.70

*Concession of 0.05% in applicable interest rate to women borrowers and armed forces personnel subject to minimum floor ceiling of RLLR

Rates as on December 29 **Source:Paisabazaar.com**

BREAKING THROUGH

Koustav Chatterjee becomes latest entrant to India's GM club



Koustav Chatterjee has become the 78th Grandmaster of the country. The 19-year-old secured his final GM norm by drawing with Mitrabha Guha in the 10th round of the National championship, said a release on Sunday. Koustav got his first GM norm in October 2021 and the second at the Asians in November 2022.

MISSING OUT

Saina among shuttlers to skip trials for Asian Mixed Team event

Two-time Commonwealth Games champion Saina Nehwal, Malvika Bansod and the injured M.R. Arjun will miss the National badminton trials for the Asian Mixed Team Championships scheduled to be held in Dubai from February 14 to 19. Saina was named along with Aakarshi Kashyap and Malvika Bansod for the trials.

NO BIG DEAL

McDonald backs no tour game policy during India tour

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald is confident that their "no tour game" policy on overseas tours will serve them well in the Test series in India in February-March. "No tour game is something we've done in the last few series, before embarking on overseas tours," he was quoted as saying by *the Sydney Morning Herald.*

ACTION MISSING

Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr. says LaLiga doing nothing about racism

Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Jr. on Saturday accused LaLiga of continuing to do nothing about racist fans, after videos on social media showed fans shouting abuse and throwing objects at him at a match a day earlier. LaLiga issued a statement saying it was following up on instances of racism at the match.

BCCI shortlists 20 cricketers for workload management

NCA will monitor these players on a daily basis for the next seven months in the lead-up to the ODI World Cup to be hosted by India in October-November 2023; Yo-Yo test and Dexa scan reintroduced

BCCI MEETING

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has shortlisted a pool of 20 male cricketers whose workload and performance will be closely monitored with an eye on regaining World Cup glory at home later this year.

The list, yet to be made public, was finalised during a review meeting for the men's team at a hotel here on Sunday, New Year's Day.

The meeting was attended by men's team head coach Rahul Dravid, captain Rohit Sharma, National Cricket Academy (NCA) head V.V.S. Laxman, BCCI secretary Jay Shah and president Roger Binny. Rohit and Binny attended the meeting via video-conferencing.

Preparing the roadmap: Coach Dravid and captain Rohit will be keeping a close eye on the players given the aim to recapture World Cup glory. FILE PHOTO

Lengthy discussions

"The issues of player availability, workload management and fitness parameters were also discussed at length during the meeting along with the roadmap to the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023," said Shah in a statement.

While the BCCI statement did not specify about the shortlist, *The Hindu* understands that the primary pool of cricketers has been identified days before the new selection committee takes charge.

The performance, fitness, workload and injury management of each of these players will be monitored by the NCA on a daily basis for at least the next seven months, in the lead-up to the ODI World Cup, to be hosted by India in October-November 2023.

It will result in Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises having to share minute details of these players' fitness with the BCCI.

"Keeping in mind the men's FTP and preparations for ICC CWC 2023, the NCA will work in tandem with IPL franchises to monitor the targeted Indian players participating in the IPL 2023," the statement said.

Efforts in the past to synergise it did not yield favourable results, thus resulting in multiple players being converted into 'IPL specialists'.

It will be interesting to see whether the BCCI manages to ensure the importance of international cricket is underlined without diluting the IPL.

In a major development, the Yo-Yo test and Dexa scan have been reintroduced as a "part of selection criteria and implemented in the customised roadmaps of the central pool of players".

The tests, among key elements of India's Test successes with Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri at the helm of affairs, had been relaxed in the last year to facilitate certain individuals' selection based on skill rather than fitness.

Meanwhile, the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), headed by Ashok Malhotra, is set to conduct interviews of 20 shortlisted candidates through video-conferencing for the national selectors' posts on Monday.

Cilic's return adds lustre to a competitive field

TATA OPEN

N. Sudarshan
PUNE

The last time Marin Cilic visited these parts, things were rather swish. It was the inaugural edition of the Tata Open Maharashtra (2018) and everything about the tournament was fresh and exciting.

The stands were spruced up, the courts were immaculately laid and the hospitality was grand. Cilic, sporting an exotic line of FILA clothing, was a cool No. 6 in the world.

Five years on, the Croat will return to the leafy environs of the Balewadi Stadium to a comparatively less swanky atmosphere but no less exciting. The 34-year-old may now be No. 17 and no longer a FILA athlete, but the event seems to have rediscovered its mojo.

After a year's cancellation because of Covid and two years spent in the less-than-ideal window after the Australian Open (2020 and 2022), the competition is back to being an important build-up tournament to the season's first Major.

This has reflected in the player roster. Wherein 2020 and 2022, there was just one top-60 player in the singles draw, the next week will see as many as eight, including five in the top-50 (rankings as on Sunday).

Star attraction: Cilic, the top seed, will be spurred to give his best in the coming week. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The strength is evident as well, where the world's second-best pair of Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury will be in action alongside home favourite Rohan Bopanna (teaming up with Netherlands' Botic van de Zandschulp).

The competitive field will no doubt spur Cilic, the star attraction and top seed, to give his best after a bittersweet 2022.

The 2014 US Open champion didn't win a single ATP title but reached the semifinals at Roland-Garros for the first time in his career, snapping a run of 12 Majors without a quarterfinal.

Second seed and World No. 35 Van de Zandschulp will look to build on the previous season's performance, where he reached a career-high ranking of No. 22 and made his first ATP tour final in Munich.

Among Indians, apart from the three wildcards – Mukund Sasikumar, Sumit Nagal and Manas Manoj Dhamne – Ramkumar Ramanathan made it to the main draw, coming through the qualifying on Sunday.

That no Indian singles player is in the top-300 is an unsettling fact. The onus will be on these four to lift the pensive mood.

The results (qualifying, final round): Flavio Cobolli (Ita) bt Zdenek Kolar (Cze) 6-4, 6-4; Elias Ymer (Swe) bt Yuki Bhambri 6-1, 6-4; Maximilian Marterer (Ger) bt Nikola Milojevic (Srb) 6-2, 6-3; Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Mattia Bellucci (Ita) 6-3, 7-5.

Hussamuddin, Solanki and Chongtham advance

Sports Bureau

Two-time Commonwealth Games bronze medalist Mohammad Hussamuddin, 2018 Commonwealth Games champion Gaurav Solanki and 2021 Asian youth champion Biswamitra Chongtham advanced to the round of 16 in their respective weight classes in the National boxing championships in Hisar on Sunday.

Hussamuddin, also an Asian bronze medallist, exhibited his fine movement and superb punching skills to outsmart Bulen Buragohain 5-0 and reach the 57kg pre-quarterfinals.

Important results (preliminary rounds): 48kg: Ashish (Har) bt Jasvinder Singh (Chd) 4-1, Abhishek Rana (Utk) bt Kughaho Swu (Nag) 3-2.

51kg: Ruchir Srivas (MP) bt Subhachbhai Rathod (Guj) 5-0, Ajay Pendor (RSPB) bt Sumit Singh (Ben) 5-0, Yogesh (Har) bt Kane Natung (Aru) 5-0, Jakson Singh (Man) bt Karan Rupini (Tri) 5-0, Bishwamitra Chongthan (SSCB) bt N. Madhaba (Odi) RSC-R1.

54kg: Aguk Juja (Aru) bt R. Parthiban (TN) 4-1, Visweswara Raonpedda (AP) bt Chandu Chapala (Tel) 4-1, Manuj Thakuria (Asm) bt Rajasimha SR (Kar) 5-0, Roshan Sain (Raj) bt Deepak Kumar (Odi) 5-0.

57kg: Mohammad Hussamuddin (SSCB) bt Bulen Buragohain (Asm) 5-0, Lallawmawma (Miz) bt Amir Tajo (Aru) 4-1.

60kg: Varinder Singh (RSPB) bt Rahul (Chd) 5-0; Gaurav Solanki (Har) bt Navraj Chauhan (HP) 5-2.

63.5kg: Ankit Narwal (RSPB) bt Arun Kumar (Pud) RSC-R1.

Hazarika claims 59kg gold

K. Keerthivasan
NAGERCOIL

Railways' Popy Hazarika warded off a tough challenge from Sukarna Adak and Sneha to win the women's 59kg gold medal in the National weightlifting championships here on Sunday.

A National record-holder in snatch (94), Hazarika could come up with an 85, but held her own amidst mounting pressure to finish clean & jerk at 107, which was one more than Sukarna and three more than Sneha. Hazarika cleared 107 in her second attempt but failed to lift 110 in her third. Sneha (108) and Sukarna (109) failed to lift in their third and final attempts.

Hazarika. K. KEERTHIVASAN

"I am not happy with my lifts. I was tired too after having competed in seven tournaments in 2022," said Hazarika.

The results: Senior: Women: 59kg: 1. Popy Hazarika (RSPB) 85, 107, 192; 2. Sukarna Adak (WB) 85, 106, 191; 3. Sneha (Har) 83, 104, 187. **Junior: Women: 59kg:** Sonam Singh (UP) 80, 104, 184; 2. M. Deepana Yomi (AP) 75, 105, 180; 3. Nikita Kamalakar (Mah) 75, 103, 178.

Youth: Women: 59kg: Nikita Kamalakar (Mah) 75, 103, 178; 2. B. Harika (AP) 76, 94, 170; 3. Sagun Rav (UP) 74, 91,165.

Arsenal opens up a seven-point lead

Tapping it in: Nketiah, right, netting Arsenal's third goal. AP

PREMIER LEAGUE

Reuters
LONDON

Arsenal closed out 2022 with a 4-2 win over Brighton & Hove Albion on Saturday that gives it a seven-point lead at the top of the Premier League after title rivals Manchester City and Newcastle United both dropped points.

Arsenal opened up a 3-0 lead through Bukayo Saka, Martin Odegaard and Eddie Nketiah but Brighton never gave up, pulling two goals back either side of a Gabriel Martinelli strike to set up a nervous finish for the Gunners, who held on to win.

Setback for Chelsea

Meanwhile, Chelsea dropped more points in its quest to climb back up the standings as Serge Aurier earned Nottingham Forest a 1-1 draw with Graham Potter's side on Sunday after the visitors had gone ahead through Raheem Sterling.

Tottenham Hotspur's hopes of regaining its place in the top four was scuppered as it suffered a 2-0 home defeat against Aston Villa.

The victory left Arsenal in pole position on 43 points from 16 games with champion City on 36, Newcastle on 34 from 17 and Manchester United on 32 from 16.

The results:
Tottenham 0 lost to Aston Villa 2 (Buendia 50, Luiz 73).
Nottingham Forest 1 (Aurier 63) drew with Chelsea 1 (Sterling 16).
Saturday: Brighton 2 (Mitoma 65, Ferguson 77) lost to Arsenal 4 (Saka 2, Odegaaard 39, Nketiah 47, Martinelli 71).

Mary stops Soumya

Sports Bureau

In a battle involving two former champions, Mary Ann Gomes beat her Indian Oil teammate Soumya Swaminathan in 53 moves to lead with 6.5 points from seven rounds of the MPL National women's chess championship at Kolhapur on Sunday.

Mary came out stronger in a rook-and-pawn endgame for her fourth successive victory and sixth in the competition.

Decisive battles on the top-12 boards left defending champion Divya Deshmukh (6) waiting in the second spot to take on Mary on Monday.

Leading results: Seventh round: Mary Ann Gomes (6.5) bt Soumya Swaminathan (5); Divya Deshmukh (6) bt Aashna Makhija (5); Sakshi Chitlange (5.5) bt Bhakti Kulkarni (5); Arpita Mukherjee (4.5) lost to Vantika Agrawal (5.5); M. Mahalakshmi (4.5) lost to Isha Sharma (5.5); Swati Ghate (4.5) lost to Rucha Pujari (5); P. Saye Sreezza (4) lost to Srija Seshadri (5); Aakanksha Hagawane (4) lost to P. Supreetha (5); Nisha Mohota (bt) V. Rindhiya (4); C. Lakshmi (4) lost to V. Varshini (5); B. Mounika Akshaya (4) lost to H. Hajra Chandreyee (5); C.M.N. Sunyuktha (5) bt Mrudul Dehankar (4); Bristy Mukherjee (4.5) drew with A.G. Nimmy (4.5); Samriddha Ghosh (5) bt Tejaswini Sagar (4); Srishti Pandey (4) drew with G. Tejaswini (4.5).

Sethuraman, Abhijeet, Mitrabha stunned on a day of surprises

NATL. MEN'S CHESS

Rakesh Rao
NEW DELHI

Unexpected winners from three out of the top four boards in the 11th round of the MPL National chess championship turned the title-race on its head on Sunday.

Front-runners

With two rounds to go, Karthik Venkataraman, Aronyak Ghosh and N.B. Hari Madhavan were the surprise front-runners with overnight co-leader Koustav Chatterjee at 8.5 points.

Joint overnight leader Abhijeet Gupta, top seed S.P. Sethuraman and rising star Mitrabha Guha suffered stunning losses to the new leaders while Koustav was extremely lucky to escape with a draw against S.L. Srihari on the second board. Abhijeet, firmly on a comeback trail after making amends for two successive defeats, suffered a third loss from the threshold of victory.

Facing Karthik, Abhijeet gained a pawn early and held a good position. Karthik did well to regain the lost ground and but in an oversight, delivered a queen-check without realising that the queen could be captured by Abhijeet's rook.

On his part, Abhijeet overlooked the simple capture and moved his king out of check. Karthik promptly grabbed Abhijeet's rooks off successive moves to force resignation.

Facing Aronyak, Sethuraman resigned on the 50th move when he found no way of saving a bishop. Hari Madhavan tormented Mitrabha for the better part of 60 moves before the Bengal player gave up.

Leading results (11th round): Abhijeet Gupta (8) lost to Karthik Venkataraman (8.5); L.R. Srihari (8) drew with Koustav Chatterjee (8.5); Aronyak Ghosh (8.5) bt S. P. Sethuraman (7.5); Mitrabha Guha (7.5) lost to N. B. Hari Madhavan (8.5); N. R. Visakh (8) bt Deep Sengupta (7); P. Shyaamnikhil (7.5) drew with Mehar Chinna Reddy (7.5); Sayantan Das (8) bt Ajay Krishna (7); Deepan Chakkravarthy (8) bt M. R. Venkatesh (7); Soman Kamotra (7) drew with Leon Mendonca (7); S. Nitin (7.5) bt M. Shyam Sundar (6.5); P. Iniyan (7.5) bt P. Karthikeyan (6.5).

INBRIEF

Luis Suarez signs two-year Gremio deal

Uruguayan international striker Luis Suarez has signed a two-year contract with Brazilian club Gremio. The 35-year-old had returned to his boyhood club Nacional last summer, scoring eight goals in 14 matches to help it win the Uruguayan league title. Suarez played at the World Cup iwithout scoring as his country was eliminated in the group stages. Suarez first left Nacional in 2006 for a season at Dutch club FC Groningen before spending four years at Ajax Amsterdam. He joined Liverpool in 2011 before moving to Spain, where he played for Barcelona from 2014 to 2020 and then Atletico Madrid. With Barca he won the Champions League in 2015 and La Liga four times. He was again crowned Liga champion with Atletico in 2021.

ATK Mohun Bagan signs midfielders Gallego, Puitea

Indian Super League (ISL) club ATK Mohun Bagan announced the signing of midfielders Federico Gallego and Lalthathanga Khawlhring (Puitea) on Saturday. Uruguayan Gallego, who represented NorthEast United FC for four seasons from 2018-2022, played 47 matches and scored nine goals. Puitea joins from Kerala Blasters FC where he played over 50 ISL games and has one goal.

LIVE TELECAST

Pakistan vs New Zealand: 2nd Test, day 1, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10.30 a.m.

Tata Open: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 2 p.m. onwards

ISL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 7.30 p.m.

Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 11 p.m.

Brazil makes short work of Norway despite Ruud's form

Kvitova seals the issue against Germany; Mertens battles in vain as Belgium bows to Bulgaria; Nadal's cheering from the team box notwithstanding Britain beats Spain

UNITED CUP

Agence France-Presse
BRISBANE

Winning touch: Pigossi cemented Brazil's win over Norway beating Eikeri in the fourth rubber. AFP

World No. 3 Casper Ruud cruised past Thiago Monteiro in straight sets but Norway crashed in their mixed teams United Cup tie against Brazil here on Sunday. After the Brazilians won both opening singles rubbers on Saturday, Ruud's 6-3, 6-2 victory brought his country back into contention.

But the comeback was short-lived with the South Americans taking the tie when Laura Pigossi outlasted Ulrikke Eikeri 6-3, 6-4. Brazil won the mixed doubles for a 4-1 victory.

Ruud was far too consistent for the 71st ranked Monteiro, who made 27 unforced errors, wrapping up a dominant win in only 70 minutes to at least give him confidence heading into the new season.

The Norwegian was runner-up at last year's French and US Opens and said he was feeling confident ahead of the Australian Open later this month where he will bid to win a first Grand Slam title.

Harriet Dart missed a chance to close out victory for Britain over Spain with an eager Rafael Nadal in the team box continually urging on his compatriots.

Dart took a 6-7(6/8), 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 loss to Paula Badosa, who cramped in the second set but apparently cured her ills with swigs of pickle juice along with ice massages.

After failing twice to serve for the second set, Badosa finally gave Spain its first point of the tie with victory in three hours.

Dan Evans put things right for the Brits, defeating Albert Ramos-Vinolas 6-3, 1-6, 6-3 to clinch a final four spot with a 3-1 win.

In Sydney, two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova proved too strong for Germany's Laura Siegemund, romping home 6-4, 6-2. German Oscar Otte defeated Dalibor Svrcina 7-6(1), 6-2 and Germany won the mixed doubles, but the Czechs won the tie 3-2.

In Perth, Bulgaria beat Belgium 3-2. Overnight 1-1, Elise Mertens put Belgium ahead beating Gergana Topalova 6-4, 3-6, 6-0 before Bulgaria levelled the tie when Dimitar Kuzmanov downed Zizou Bergs 6-2, 6-0. Shinikova and Lazarov clinched the mixed doubles and the match for Bulgaria.

The results (on Sunday):
In Sydney: Czech Republic bt Germany 3-2 {Petra Kvitova bt Laura Siegemund 6-4, 6-2; Dalibor Svrcina lost to Oscar Otte 6-7(1), 2-6; Marie Bouzkova & Jiri Lahecka lost to Siegemund & Zverev 4-6, 6-7(1)}.
Great Britain bt Spain 3-1 {Harriet Dart lost to Paula Badosa 6-7(6), 7-6(5), 6-1; Dan Evans bt Albert Ramos-Vinolas 6-3, 1-6, 6-3}.
In Brisbane: Brazil bt Norway 4-1 {Thiago Monteiro lost to Casper Ruud 3-6, 2-6; Laura Pigossi bt Ulrikke Eikeri 6-3, 6-4; Luisa Stefani & Rafael Matos bt Eikeri & Viktor Durasovic 6-4, 7-5}.
Poland bt Kazakhstan 4-1 {Hubert Hurkacz bt Alexander Bublik 7-6(8), 4-6, 6-3; Magda Linette bt Zhibek Kulambayeva 6-2, 6-1; Hurkacz & Iga Swiatek bt Grigoriy Lomakin & Kulambayeva 6-3, 6-4}.
In Perth: Bulgaria bt Belgium 3-2 {Gergana Topalova lost to Elise Mertens 4-6, 6-3, 0-6; Dimitar Kuzmanov bt Zizou Bergs 6-2, 6-0; Isabella Shinikova & Alexandar Lazarov bt Mertens & David Goffin 1-6, 7-6(5), [10-6]}.
Croatia bt Argentina 5-0 {Petra Martic bt Nadia Podoroska 6-2, 4-6, 6-1; Borna Gojo bt Federico Coria 7-6(5), 6-4; Tara Wurth & Gojo bt Podoroska & Tomas Martin Etcheverry 1-6, 6-4, [10-4]}.

Taylor tells Australia to experiment with five bowlers

Bowling resources: Taylor believes Australia has the capability to win Tests with a six-five batter-bowler combination. AFP

Press Trust of India
SYDNEY

With the high-profile tour of India fast approaching, former Australia skipper Mark Taylor wants the Pat Cummins-led side to explore the option of playing five bowlers in the third and final Test against South Africa beginning here on Wednesday.

The tour of India, comprising four Tests for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, will be held in February-March.

Going into the final Test at Sydney, Australia holds an unassailable 2-0 series lead, providing an opportunity to explore a few other options.

"They've an opportunity in Sydney to try a few things. I know people say you shouldn't try things in Test matches, but with Cameron Green not playing, I'd really like to see Alex Carey bat at six and Australia pick five bowlers.

"They can go on all out attack with the ball and rely on their top five and Carey to make enough runs to win the Test match," Taylor was quoted as saying by Wide World of Sports.

Because of injuries to Mitchell Starc and Cameron Green during their massive win in Melbourne, Australia has called up Matthew Renshaw and Ashton Agar.

"I think with the bowling they've got there, with whoever those quicks are going to be, you've got enough guys there to take the 20 wickets. South Africa only just made 200 in the final innings in Melbourne for the first time in four Test matches, their batting is very gettable at the moment.

"So I'd be looking to attack with the ball and back yourselves to make enough runs with only five specialist batters," Taylor added.

Australia, which currently heads the World Test Championships table, will travel to India at the end of the assignments against South Africa.

Pakistan and New Zealand seek Test turnaround in new year

NZ IN PAKISTAN

Agence France-Presse
KARACHI

Waiting in the wings: Henry takes his turn in the nets watched by Conway, right, Ronchi and Southee, left. AP

A draw last week having stopped a run of defeats for Pakistan and New Zealand, both sides will be seeking to go one better in the second and final Test in Karachi starting on Monday.

The draw halted Pakistan's four-Test losing streak at home including a first-ever 3-0 whitewash by England. New Zealand also arrived in Pakistan on the back of a 3-0 drubbing by England.

Skipper Babar Azam vowed his team would play "positive and aggressive cricket" after Pakistan finished 2022 without a Test win at home.

New Zealand was in a good position to win the first Test on the final day with Pakistan on 77 for two, needing 97 runs to avoid an innings defeat. But Saud Shakeel (55 not out) and Mohammad Wasim (43) averted the danger with a 71-run eighth-wicket stand eating up time and overs to salvage a draw.

Pakistan will look to bring in pacer Naseem Shah or Hasan Ali, while New Zealand may consider Matt Henry in place of a spinner if it finds the pitch suitable for pace.

The teams (from):
Pakistan: Babar Azam (Capt.), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim, Naseem Shah, Nauman Ali, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Agha Salman, Saud Shakeel, Shan Masood and Zahid Mahmood
New Zealand: Tim Southee (Capt.), Michael Bracewell, Tom Blundell, Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Ish Sodhi, Blair Tickner, Neil Wagner, Kane Williamson and Will Young.

It's Humanitarian vs. Queen Envied in the Golconda Oaks

HYDERABAD: Humanitarian and Queen Envied should fight out the finish of the Golconda Oaks, the stellar attraction of Monday's (Jan. 2) races.

1 ABERADER PLATE (1,400m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 12.40 p.m.: 1. Strauss (2) Suraj Narredu 60, 2. City Cruise (3) R.S. Jodha 59.5, 3. Mireya (7) Surya Prakash 58, 4. Soorya Vahan (5) Md. Ismail 56.5, 5. Arba Wahed Arba (1) Afroz Khan 54.5, 6. Cash Register (6) Kuldeep S 54.5, 7. Flaming Falcon (8) B. Nikhil 54.5, 8. My Marvel (9) P. Ajeeth Kumar 53.5 and 9. N R I Majestic (4) Rafique Sk. 52.5.
1. STRAUSS, 2. CITY CRUISE, 3. ARBA WAHED ARBA

2 HOVERCRAFT PLATE (1,400m) (Terms), 3-y-o only (Cat. II), 1.10: 1. Huntingdon (6) Afroz Khan 56, 2. Assured Success (5) Surya Prakash 52, 3. Faiz (4) Rafique Sk. 52, 4. Ice Blue (1) Gaurav Singh 52, 5. Lucky Nine (2) B.R. Kumar 52, 6. Golden Gazelle (7) P. Ajeeth Kumar 50.5, 7. N R I Doublepower (8) Hindu Singh 50.5 and 8. Santa Barbara (3) B. Nikhil 50.5.
1. HUNTINGDON, 2. N R I DOUBLEPOWER, 3. LUCKY NINE

3 CUPID PLATE (DIV. III) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 1.40: 1. Maximum Glamour (3) Deepak Singh 60, 2. Top In Class (5) P. Trevor 58.5, 3. Sun Dancer (1) Mukesh Kumar 57.5, 4. Vintage Brut (2) Rafique Sk. 57, 5. Rhythm Selection (6) Ajay Kumar 55, 6. Mind Reader (4) R.S. Jodha 54, 7. Laurus (8) Akshay Kumar 53 and 8. Above The Law (7) Md. Ismail 52.5.
1. MAXIMUM GLAMOUR, 2. TOP IN CLASS, 3. LAURUS

4 MOTHER TERESA PLATE (1,400m), 5-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III), 2.10: 1. Aiza (7) Sonu Kumar 60, 2. Hot Seat (9) A.A. Vikrant 60, 3. Kachnar (2) Shivansh 60, 4. Lady Danger (4) Akshay Kumar 60, 5. Muaser (3) P. Ajeeth Kumar 59, 6. Wot's Up Jay (1) B.R. Kumar 59, 7. Silk Route (10) Mukesh Kumar 57, 8. Sweet Melody (8) Afroz Khan 57, 9. Red River (6) Ajay Kumar 56.5 and 10. Ar Superior (5) Santosh Raj 54.5.
1. LADY DANGER, 2. KACHNAR, 3. WOT'S UP JAY

5 SRI A.S. KRISHNA MEMORIAL CUP (1,600m), rated 80 and above (Cat. I), 2.45: 1. Hartnell (4) Shivansh 62, 2. Top Secret (5) Mukesh Kumar 60, 3. Watch My Stride (3) Akshay Kumar 57.5, 4. Premier Action (6) Afroz Khan 57, 5. Kesariya Balam (1) Hindu Singh 51.5 and 6. Mark My Day (2) Md. Ekram Alam 50.
1. WATCH MY STRIDE, 2. TOP SECRET, 3. PREMIER ACTION

6 RANGA REDDY CUP (2,400m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3.15: 1. Nightmare (2) Sonu Kumar 60, 2. Francis Bacon (4) Surya Prakash 58, 3. Just Incredible (3) Srinath 57, 4. Juramento (1) Akshay Kumar 56.5, 5. Yesterday (6) P. Trevor 56, 6. Wallop And Gallop (7) P. Ajeeth Kumar 55 and 7. Path Of Peace (5) Afroz Khan 53.5.
1. YESTERDAY, 2. JURAMENTO, 3. JUST INCREDIBLE

7 BEST OF GOLD PLATE (DIV. II) (1,400m) Maiden, 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3.45: 1. Milton Keynes (8) Md. Ekram Alam 60, 2. Visionary (7) Kuldeep S 59, 3. Eastern Blaze (4) B. Nikhil 56.5, 4. Protocol (2) Md. Ismail 56.5, 5. Role Model (9) Gaurav Singh 56.5, 6. Riffa (6) B.R. Kumar 56, 7. Track Blazer (3) Santosh Raj 55.5, 8. Chica Bonita (1) A.A. Vikrant 55 and 9. Samrat (5) Mohit Singh 55.
1. VISIONARY, 2. MILTON KEYNES, 3. EASTERN BLAZE

8 GOLCONDA OAKS (Gr. 2) (2,400m) (Terms), Fillies 4-y-o only, 4.15: 1. Hoping Cloud (1) Mohit Singh 57, 2. Humanitarian (3) Suraj Narredu 57, 3. N R I Superpower (5) Akshay Kumar 57, 4. Nugget (2) Srinath 57, 5. Princess Daka (4) Gaurav Singh 57 and 6. Queen Envied (6) P. Trevor 57.
1. HUMANITARIAN, 2. QUEEN ENVIED

9 WISHFUL THINKING PLATE (1,600m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 4.45: 1. Grand Duke (10) Gaurav Singh 60, 2. Carnival Lady (2) B. Nikhil 59.5, 3. Superstellar (7) P. Trevor 59.5, 4. Desert Sultan (4) A.A. Vikrant 56, 5. Queen Blossom (9) Md. Ismail 56, 6. Special And Thong (6) Aneel 54.5, 7. Alpine Girl (8) Santosh Raj 54, 8. N R I Ultrapower (1) Akshay Kumar 54, 9. Akash (5) G. Naresh 53.5, 10. I Am Superman (3) Surya Prakash 53 and 11. Sucker Punch (11) Afroz Khan 52.
1. SUPERSTELLAR, 2. N R I ULTRAPOWER, 3. AKASH
Day's Best: **SUPERSTELLAR**
Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. (ii) 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.; Mini Jackpot: (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5. (ii) 6, 7, 8 & 9.
Treble: (i) 2, 3 & 4, (ii) 4, 5 & 6, (iii) 7, 8 & 9.
Tanala: All races.

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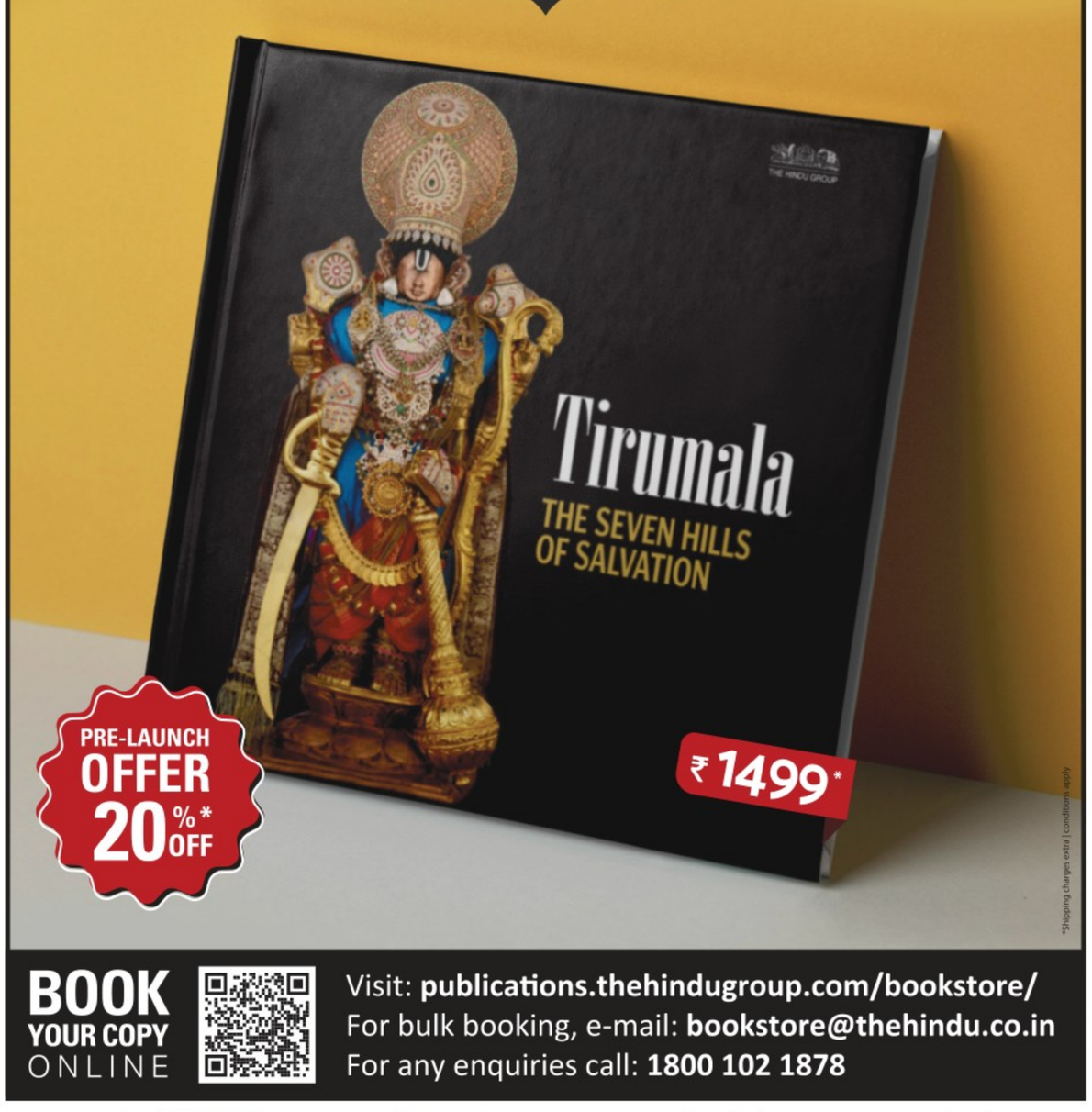

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